



# THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

- This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.
- A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.
- This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.
- The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.
- When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

**The Decision to Demolish:**  
**Case Studies of Decision-making criteria for 20<sup>th</sup> century**  
**mass social housing in Edinburgh**

Chanen Munkong

Submitted for a Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Architecture  
School of Arts Culture and Environment  
The University of Edinburgh

2006



## **ABSTRACT**

This is an empirical study of the rationale the lays behind the decisions made to refurbish or demolish 20<sup>th</sup> century social mass-housing. The study is based on four case studies located in Edinburgh. From these studies, the decision-making criteria are identified. These fall into three broad categories, which are structural integrity, sociocultural value, and economic practicality. The analysis of these three categories of criteria sheds light on the way in which each is used in justifying the decisions taken. The case studies include 1) the demolition of West Granton Housing Scheme-A; 2) the demolition of Tweedsmuir and Grampian Houses; 3) the demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses; and 4) The mixed solution of demolition and refurbishment applied to Ebenezer MacRae's Housing Estates.

The study analyses the decision-making process according to three criteria: structural integrity, economic practicality, and sociocultural value. While structural integrity is a precondition for a building's survival and economic viability the fundamental language in which the discussion is conducted, sociocultural value is also of critical significance, as it most clearly indicates the precise and often complex nature of the problem and its solution. The broader context in which these competing agendas operate, however, is political, and as this study makes clear, the ultimate decision and justification on why a building might be demolished or conserved is political.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I am particularly grateful to my supervisor, Professor Angus J Macdonald, Head of School of Arts, Culture and Environmental, for his intellectual guidance and patient supervision; my second supervisor Professor Iain Boyd Whyte, for his academic advice and encouragement; John Lowry, a lecturer of Architecture, for his help and advice and for his particular interest in my work. Clive Fenton, for help and valuable discussions about Edinburgh.

It is not possible to acknowledge every person who had given advices and supports however I would like to acknowledge generous supports of some distinctive persons, friends, and colleagues as well as institutions that have assisted in the different phase of my study. I would like to mention Edinburgh Housing Department and its officers Neil Lawrence, Stephen Whitehead, Peter McLean, Peter Strong, Stewart Avinua, Edinburgh City archivists, Pam and Jo, Dr. Deborah Mays and Louisa Humm of Historic Scotland, I wish to thanks all my friends who have been helpful and considerate during the study. Special thanks for Bruce Curry, my friend, who took on a backbreaking task of editing this thesis. Natthapong Jungteerapanich and Anothai Nitibhon for their much needed support.

This PhD. thesis represents part of my long years of higher education in Scotland- where I gained much experiences and invaluable thoughts. It is a great opportunity given by the Royal Thai Government who provided full supports during my stay in the country. Finally, I would like to express my gratefulness to my parent for their warm support and encouragement.



# CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>iv</b>

## **CHAPTER 1** Rationales behind Changes in Ordinary 20th Century Social Housing

1.1.	Introduction	1
1.2.	Reasoning methods applied to 20th century Social Housing	2
1.2.1.	Essential requirements	2
1.2.2.	Economic practicality	4
1.2.3.	Sociocultural value	6
1.3.	Rationale and the Interplay of Reasons	9

## **CHAPTER 2** Introduction to Case studies of Decisions making on the future of 20th century Council Mass-Housing in Edinburgh

2.1.	Aim of the Thesis	10
2.2.	Ordinary 20th century social mass-housing	12
2.3.	Method and Objectives of the Study	16
2.4.	Introduction to the case studies	18

## **CHAPTER 3** The Decision to demolish West Granton Scheme A

3.1.	Introduction	21
3.2.	Background of the West Granton Housing Schemes	
3.2.1.	Redevelopment of the West Pilton Temporary Housing Area	22
3.2.2.	The West Granton Housing Schemes	27
3.2.3.	West Granton Scheme A	29
3.2.4.	West Granton Scheme B	38
3.2.5.	The Decline of West Granton Scheme A	39
3.3.	The Decision Making on the Demolition of Scheme A	45
3.4.	Reasons involved in decision-making process	
3.4.1.	Structural Integrity	55
3.4.2.	Defective design features and Adaptability	55
3.4.3.	Cost of redevelopment	56
3.5.	Summary and Conclusions	56

## **CHAPTER 4 The Demolition of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses**

4.1.	Introduction	58
4.2.	Background of Niddrie Marischal Policies	
4.2.1.	Niddrie Marischal Policies	59
4.2.2.	Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses	61
4.2.3.	Low-rise buildings in Niddrie House	63
4.2.4.	Decline of Niddrie House	66
4.3.	The Rehabilitation of Niddrie Houses	70
4.4.	Niddrie Houses after the Rehabilitation Project	80
4.5.	The Factors involved in the Decision-Making Process	
4.5.1.	Economic consideration	83
4.5.2.	Image of housing	84
4.5.3.	Demographics and sizes of dwellings	85
4.5.4.	Functional Performance of Building	85
4.5.5.	The Form of the Dwelling and Its Operational Environment	86
4.6.	Summary and Conclusions	87

## **CHAPTER 5 The Demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses**

5.1.	Introduction	88
5.2.	Background of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses	
5.2.1.	Leith Fort Housing design competition	89
5.2.2.	A Building Description	91
5.2.3.	Image of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses	95
5.2.4.	The decline of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses	97
5.3.	The Decision to demolish Grampian and Cairngorm Houses	99
5.4.	The reasons involved in the decision-making	
5.4.1.	Structural integrity	110
5.4.2.	Financial and Economic Factors	112
5.4.3.	Management policy and Functional Performance of Buildings	116
5.4.4.	Social value	117
5.4.5.	Change of Appearance	118
5.4.6.	Negative Image	120
5.4.7.	Cultural Value	121
5.5.	Summary and Conclusions	127

## **CHAPTER 6 An Examination of the Decision-Making Criteria applied to the Futures of Ebenezer MacRae's Housing Estates**

6.1.	Introduction	129
6.2.	Background of the Housing Estates	
6.2.1.	A Brief Background of the 1930s Housing Improvement	130
6.2.2.	An Important Local Architect: Ebenezer James MacRae	131
6.2.3.	A Building Description: Craigmillar Castle Housing Estate	133
6.2.4.	A Building Description: Piershill Square East & West	138

6.3.	Background to Problems related to the Social Housing Estates	
6.3.1.	An Outline of the Housing Situation during the 1970-1990s	142
6.3.2.	The Demolition of Craigmillar Castle Housing Estate	147
6.3.3.	The refurbishment of Piershill Square Housing Estate	151
6.4.	A Comparative Analysis of Decision-making Criteria	
6.4.1.	Essential requirements	158
6.4.2.	Location	161
6.4.3.	Cost of refurbishment and scale of the problems	163
6.4.4.	Appearance of the buildings	163
6.4.5.	Value of Community	164
6.4.6.	Cultural Value	164
6.5.	Conclusions	165

## **CHAPTER 7 Decisions-making Criteria for 20th century social Housing**

7.1.	A Summary	167
7.2.	A Change in the Strategy of Housing Improvement	170
7.3.	The Evaluation of the Location	171
7.4.	An Explanation of Decision-making Criteria	
7.4.1.	Structural integrity	173
7.4.2.	Sociocultural value	174
7.4.3.	Economic practicality	177
7.4.4.	Political Reason	178

## **REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

References	182
Bibliography	188
Primary Sources	
Chapter 3	192
Chapter 4	193
Chapter 5	194
Chapter 6	194
References of Illustrations	
Chapter 3	195
Chapter 4	197
Chapter 5	199
Chapter 6	201

# CHAPTER 1

## Rationales behind Changes in Ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> Century Social Housing

### 1.1. Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the rationale behind decision making process applied to ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century social mass housing. Theoretically, the rationale behind decisions applied to natural and man-made environments would appear to be interchangeable, however, applications of the rationales can differ considerably in practice. The 'ecological' rationale and its decision-making criteria stem from a strong basis of ecological and biological science.<sup>1</sup> To a large extent, the body of knowledge of those field of science provides a solid theoretical ground on which conflicting opinions may be resolved. On the other hand, Mason also points out that conservation of cultural heritage has no such theoretical ground on which to rely. Decisions on changes in the physical environment have to be justified on an individual basis because of its diverse characteristics. It cannot be assumed that 'cultural' environment can be understood in strictly 'ecological' term – or any other single term – rather, as Mason says, "One needs to refer to economics, cultural, political, and social theory to understand the ecology of heritage and how its conservation operates in the context of society at large".<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the rationale behind the decision concerning urban environment is likely to derive from a combination of reasoning methods drawing on related fields such as engineering and the applied sciences, economics, the arts and history, political and social science. Therefore, in order to understand any particular rationale, it is critical

---

<sup>1</sup> Randall Mason, "Economics and Heritage conservation: Concepts, Values and Agenda for research" in the meeting *Economic and Heritage Conservation*, (Los Angeles, Getty Institute, December, 1998), 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 21.

that both the logical mechanism of each line of reasoning and the way in which the reasons interrelate within that rationale are understood.

## 1.2. Reasoning methods applied to 20<sup>th</sup> century Social Housing

### 1.2.1. *Essential requirements*

The first category of reasoning is concerned with the essential requirements of users. There is a range of standard or criteria by which housing should satisfy in order to be considered 'fit for human habitation'. In Scotland, the Tolerable Standard of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987<sup>1</sup> provides a benchmark for the assessment of housing conditions. Recently, it was amended to include the Standard Amenities. The revised standard states that a property should be:

- Structurally stable;
- Substantially free from rising or penetrating damp;
- Satisfactory provision for natural and artificial lighting, for ventilation and for heating;
- Adequate piped supply of wholesome water available within the house;
- Has a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water within the house;
- Has toilet facilities available for the exclusive use of the occupants of the house and suitably located within the house;
- Has a fixed bath or shower and a wash-hand basin, each provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water and suitable located within the house;
- Has an effective system of drainage and disposal of foul and surface water;
- Has satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food within the house; and
- Has satisfactory access to all external doors and outbuildings.

This list of requirements gives a general picture of standard physical-condition to which all forms of dwellings should conform. They cover the two main aspects that are structural integrity and functional performance of the buildings. Structural integrity is the most essential quality of buildings in use. "Structure is fundamental: without structure there is no building and therefore no 'commodity'. Without well-designed structure there can be no 'delight'".<sup>2</sup> In the decision making process, if the building in question has structural problems, options for decision to conserve may involve repair,

---

<sup>1</sup> The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, Section 86 and Schedule 18, database online available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/news/2000/12/se3192.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> Angus J. Macdonald, *Structure and Architecture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Oxford, Architectural Press, 2001), xi.

consolidation or replacement of the decayed parts. A common option of decision on building with severe dilapidated structure is demolition.

In terms of functional performance, requirements of the statutory standard of fitness involve issues such as lighting, ventilation, sanitation, modern conveniences and building services. In the current trend towards sustainable development, it is suggested that energy efficiency should be included in response to environmental issues. All housing will require refurbishment, improvement, or rehabilitation at some stage or it becomes substandard. These courses of actions aim to maintain a satisfactory standard of the building and are generally perceived as part of a building's maintenance. According to Weldon's analysis of BS 3811,<sup>1</sup> a variety of terms is used to describe different degrees of maintenance. Refurbishment refers to a way in which buildings' amenity is upgraded, for examples, new hot and cold water systems, and new bathroom and kitchen. "Refurbishment is possibly most important where a building no longer complies with statutory standard, or even current expectations".<sup>2</sup> Improvement is used to describe a course of action, which may be essential "where the accommodation can no longer be used by the occupants, perhaps due to an occupant's disability".<sup>3</sup> Weldon seems to reserve the term 'rehabilitation' for generic improvements such as improvement of a building group in an area, demolition or rebuilding of groups of buildings. The rehabilitation may include extensions and conversions, which are practical ways to create additional space because it may be easier than finding other suitable accommodation. Although this would appear similar to improvement, rehabilitation involves a larger scale of changes. Such courses of actions are bound to take place during a building's life-expectancy. In turn, it implies that life expectancy of a building depends on the adaptability of its structure and its capacity to accommodate changing demands. Low adaptability of a building may lead to its demolition. Weldon explains that non-traditional high-rise dwellings were often demolished because of rigidity of the building's structure. Additional living space may be obtained by

---

<sup>1</sup> British Standard, 1984

<sup>2</sup> Paul Balchin and Maureen Rhoden, ed., *Housing: the essential foundation* (London, Routledge, 1998), 191.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 192.

enclosing balcony's space and making it weatherproof. The degree of adaptability is assessed on evaluations of functional performance of the building and its structural integrity. The degree of adaptability is therefore an indicator of the value of buildings, from the viewpoint of essential requirement.

### 1.2.2. *Economic practicality*

The second category of reasoning is concerned with economic practicality. Although satisfactory conditions of housing may be evaluated by structural stability and functional performance of building, the conditions also depends on other factors such as management and maintenance policy, the social-economic environment of the area and the expectations of residents. These factors can be assessed by a variety of economic analyses, for example, cost-effective analysis, scarcity matter, willingness-to-pay and demand-supply of the housings in the market. Cost effectiveness is probably the most persuasive standard of judgement about changes in residential buildings today. In the open market, standards of satisfactory conditions vary considerably depending on targeted residents. Changes in the targeted group could also have impact on the standard of 'fit for human habitation'. At the upper-end of the market, the standard may be high above the statutory standard, reflected in the higher prices. When local housing authorities develop strategies for development and rehabilitation of 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing, their main target households are mainly people in low-income group. Their options for housing are constrained by limited financial capacity. Simultaneously, the local authorities have to consider the most effective solutions to social problems associated with existing housing and around the neighbourhoods, even if they are not the cheapest solutions. In conjunction with a constantly high demand for affordable housing, decisions concerning substandard buildings are often "...justified by cost-benefit analysis, which allow a comparison to be made where there are alternative solutions, so the optimum solution can be selected".<sup>1</sup> When the options to conserve/ refurbish and to demolish/rebuild are compete, it would often appear that the most cost-effective options is likely to be taken.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Balchin and Maureen Rhoden, ed., *Housing: the essential foundation* (London, Routledge, 1998), 193.

The rule of supply and demand is also applicable to the future of housing. Demographic change of a residential area is an indicator by which demand of housing is evaluated. Demographic changes have direct impact on the housing market. O'Leary describes a situation in which large numbers of the pre-1960s houses were demolished because of the increase in smaller-household size in UK. Given demographic change with more smaller-households, private [small] low-rise flats within commuting distance of major employment centre were easily sold on open market.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, a report on empty public sector dwellings in Scotland indicates that, in 1992, vacant dwellings were of small sizes. The report concludes:

"In addition to dwelling type, void rates relates to dwelling size. Voids are highest in 1-apartment dwellings...certain types of dwelling types and sizes attract higher turnover void rates and longer void periods." (Murie, Wainwright and Anderson, 1994, 23-24; conclusions 3.23 and 3.24)

The report did not demonstrate actual causes of the low demand for small flats in public sector (void rate). The conclusions of the report and O'Leary explanation reflect the logic of supply and demand. When the supply of any types of flat increases, such flats naturally become in excess of demand and resulting in the undesirable ones became vacant. The report also demonstrates that when certain groups of housing were subject to low demand for a considerable period of time, decisions to demolish were taken as a necessary action for the strategic rehabilitation and regeneration of problematic residential areas. It points out that in such circumstance, the local authority was usually in favour of demolition:

"It is common for [public sector] landlords to be considering demolition to property that is in low demand or without a viable future in its current physical state or tenure...there is little evidence that public sector landlords adopt any hard and fast guidelines on when a property falls into having a status of 'non-viable future'..." (Murie, Wainwright and Anderson, 1998, 56)

The report also points out that amongst vacant houses under the ownership of 40 local housing authorities in Scotland, the numbers of houses not available for letting was 4,277 units, of which 1,428 units were being held for sale and 2849 were awaiting demolition. Among 2849 housing units, 29% had been vacant for 4-12 months, 30% for

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Balchin and Maureen Rhoden, ed., *Housing: the essential foundation* (London, Routledge, 1998), 133.



12-24 months, 31% for over 24 months and 10% for shorter than 4 months.<sup>1</sup> The authors speculated that the duration of vacancy may be a key criterion by which decisions to demolish had been made. Scarcity of land and limited budget for social housing has put local housing authorities under the pressure to maximise the use of the land and the budget as well as existing housing stock. Long-term vacancy indicates that there is no demand for the housing; therefore, it would be more economical to demolish and redevelop the land.

### *1.2.3. Sociocultural value*

The third category of reasoning is concerned with sociocultural values of buildings. It focuses on the relationships between architectural characteristics of the buildings and their environments for example owners and users, cultural context, religions and belief, socioeconomic system, urban planning and building regulations. The ways in which decision-makers perceive these relationships can have significant influences. As discussed in 1.2.2, changes to housing are undertaken in according to characteristics of residents such as type of tenures, family sizes, balance of age group, levels of incomes, and ownerships. Quantitative aspects of these factors are clearly critical for economic analysis. The following discussion focuses on qualitative aspect of social factors as well as cultural value.

There are two groups of study concerning the way which characteristics of buildings influence the building's future. The first group studies the relationship between architectural design features and social problems relating to housing. The pioneering works of Oscar Newman (*Defensible Space*, 1972) and Alice Coleman (*Utopia on Trial*, 1985) are research which focuses on the impact of buildings' characters on changes in social structure of residential areas in the United States and the United Kingdom respectively. According to the studies, Newman and Coleman reached a similar conclusion pointing out that the architectural design features of modern high-rise housing does not allow natural surveillance. This results in space that offers an inviting atmosphere for criminals who can escape easily after committing crimes. The

---

<sup>1</sup> Alan Murie, Sally Wainwright and Keith Anderson, "Empty public sector dwellings in Scotland" (Scottish Executives, 1994, photocopied), 23.

atmosphere in high-rise flats prevent a sense of territory and ownership. The researchers showed evidence that if a place lacks a clear sense of territory and natural surveillance given by residents and passers-by, such a place is likely to suffer from misuse of space, vandalism and crime. Low and medium rise housing may host similar problems if there are defective design features. Poyner and Webb carried out research "to define the physical characteristics of low-rise medium-density housing, which seem to minimize the risk of crime". They concluded, "housing layout design is the most effective means of controlling crime in residential areas".<sup>1</sup> They also recognised the influences of local differences and noted that other patterns of design may prove secure in other cultures. For the UK, "Our proposals tend to see the secure threshold and boundary around the house to include the house and a secure yard or garden."<sup>2</sup> This theory has been applied to improvements of problematic low-rise housing. As a consequence of these researches, it is believed that if sense of territory should be enhanced in the forms of fences, gates and set-back of front doors and also surveillance should be obtained to increase the sense of security. In doing so, the degree of the social problems may be reduced. Therefore, if any buildings are affected by such defective design features, it would likely be adapted. In this perspective, the tower block is the form of dwellings that has the lowest security. This has resulted in the demolitions of tower blocks and other mass housing that were not considered adaptable to standards of territory and surveillance. Accordingly, the failure of the Modern housing, is to some extent, due to the discrepancy between characteristics of the housing and social patterns.

The second group of studies is concerned with the value of building from the view of architectural history. The study associated with conservation of cultural heritage. The main body of knowledge stems from a collective experience of UNESCO ICOMOS member countries. The 'Why-question' is used to identify sociocultural values of building that contribute to options of decision on changes in the buildings in question. It is carried out by consciously asking "Why conserve?", "Why demolish?" or "Why refurbish?", for example. The why question may have a variety of valid forms insofar

---

<sup>1</sup>Barry Poyner and Barry Webb, *Crime free housing* (Oxford, Butterworth Architecture, 1991), 116

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 117.

as they conform to the decision maker's intentions. The values identified are subsequently used in decision-making process. In the literature on conservation, the why-question has been developed to serve one particular aim of safeguarding cultural heritage, which perceive the architectural and historical value of buildings as being of prime importance. Thus its literary form usually appears as *Why conserve?* which is "at the core of each and every Conservation Charter...".<sup>1</sup> The question may be rephrased as "*What are the cultural values of the building in question that are worthy of conservation?*". Feilden, a leading expert of the field, proposes that there are 3 categories of hypothetical values with which decision makers should be concerned.<sup>2</sup>

- 1) Emotional value; a) wonder b) identity c) continuity d) spiritual and symbolic
- 2) Cultural value; a) documentary, b) historic, c) archaeological, age and scarcity
- 3) Use value; a) functional, b) economic, c) social d) political

This cultural evaluation-paradigm focuses on the building's characteristics from a perspective of architectural history. Outstanding architectural characteristics of buildings were perceived as the most critical value for heritage conservation. The concept of "*Outstanding*"<sup>3</sup> also enables the practice of heritage conservation. Due to the limits of economic practicality, the decision to conserve any architectural heritage has to be highly selective. It can only aim to conserve exemplary buildings in order to avoid disruption and conflicts with social and economic development. From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the perception of cultural value has gradually shifted from architectural grandeur to historical importance, including ordinary and contemporary buildings. The expansion has widened the interest in buildings ranging from the ancient times to the present day. Large number of 'ordinary historic' buildings can be rationally protected and conserved in a similar way to the 'architectural grandeur'. Accordingly, if the values identified represent historical or architectural merits, the decision to conserve such buildings is justified. According to Bell, although

---

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Bell, *The historic Scotland guide to international conservation charters* (Edinburgh, Historic Scotland, 1997), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard M Feilden, *Conservation of Historic Buildings* (Suffolk, St Edmundsbury Press, 1982), 6

<sup>3</sup> Pearce, D., *Conservation Today*, (Routledge, London, 1989), 17.

There are other expressions based on this concept such as "**The best**" used by [Macdonald, S., (ed.), *Modern matter*, (Dorset, Donhead Publishing 1996, 12.)] and "**Unique**" used by [Barbey Gilles and Clivaz Michel, 1994, *A possible selection of Criteria for safeguarding the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Built Heritage* in the third International Conference: (Barcelona, DOCOMOMO International; 16 Sept – 19 Sept 1994, 63.)]

why-question is a universal reasoning method, their applications are governed by the perception of value. Without the perception of historical value, decisions to conserve 'ordinary buildings' would appear invalid from the perception of "outstanding value". Perception of value is a key mechanism that justifies the use of a particular set of criteria for evaluating a building. The perception is the logical mechanism that justifies the relevancy of values and the ways in which decision makers formulate why-questions. Thus, in order to understand sociocultural evaluation of the mainstream decision makers, their perception of value has to be clarified.

### **1.3. Rationale and the Interplay of Reasons**

In practice, variations of the interplay of reasons would result in a diversity of rationales. When dealing with 'outstanding' buildings, the current knowledge is capable of explaining the way in which sociocultural reason contributes to the rationale and the way in which it interrelates to other reasons. Nevertheless, the explanation has not yet been extended to ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Empirical study is required so as to shed light onto this issue. At present, none of the existing research provides a practical explanation of the perception of sociocultural value and how it is applied to ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Nor is there any empirical study of how the three reasons contribute to the future of ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings in practice. Therefore, this thesis aims to carry out empirical research into the rationale behind decisions concerning ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Introduction to Case studies of Decisions making on the future of 20<sup>th</sup> century Council Mass-Housing in Edinburgh**

#### **2.1. Aim of the Thesis**

The aim of this thesis is to provide an explanation of the rationale behind decision making applied to ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century residential buildings. It studies actual decision made by the Housing Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council about 20<sup>th</sup> century social mass housing in Edinburgh, Scotland. Edinburgh was chosen as the test-case for this study as it possesses a large number of social housing estates built under the influence of the modern movement in architecture. Although there was also a variety of social housing owned by other public sector and non-profit organisations, the council housing made up the largest proportion until the late 1990s when most of it have been privatised or transferred to other ownership. The City Council has been dealing with problems relating to the council housing<sup>1</sup> since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its collective experiences should reflect the rationale of the majority of the people of Edinburgh. Such rationale will be used as a ground on which understanding of the way in which the mainstreams dealt with 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing is analysed. Between the 1980 and 1997, large numbers of 20<sup>th</sup> century social mass housing have undergone extensive improvement programmes including refurbishment and demolition, together with new build, in order to solve persistent housing problems. The decision applied to this social housing will be used as the basis of this thesis.

---

<sup>1</sup> In Scotland, social housing owned by the City of Edinburgh Council is known as council housing.

An interesting aspect of the decision making is how the Housing Committee, whose decisions, presumably, represent the mainstream opinion, dismissed the opinion of a pressure group which sought to conserve some of the 20<sup>th</sup> century council housing. The main pressure group is the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS), in association with the Scottish National Group of DoCoMoMo (the International Working Party for **D**ocumentation and **C**onservation of buildings, site, and neighbourhoods of the **M**odern **M**ovement). A common aim of these groups is to promote informed evaluation 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural heritage. Both seemed to adopt a reasoning method on conservation of buildings from UNESCO ICOMOS,<sup>1</sup> which is the main body of the current architectural conservation movement. In 1994, the AHSS attempted to lobby against demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses, a twin tower block at Leith Fort Housing estate. It argued that these tower blocks were of architectural merit and worthy of conservation. There was little support from the public and the authorities for the argument for conserving the tower blocks, although the proposal to refurbish the tower blocks seemed to be technically and economically plausible. The cultural appraisal of ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings has resulted in the public now holding a sceptical view about relevancy of the conservation concept to contemporary ordinary buildings. To an extent, it would appear that the decision to demolish contradicted to the reasoning method that the pressure group adopted from UNESCO ICOMOS. This thesis also aims to provide an explanation of the conflicting opinions.

It is critical to be aware of the influence of some other factors affecting decisions, such as the agenda of decision makers and stakeholders, together with available options, and the regulating system applied to urban development in particular areas. This thesis studies the reasoning within a specific context in which both the decision makers and the pressure group shared a universal goal that is the well-being of the people in Edinburgh in terms of both physical and psychological needs. Due to socioeconomic demands and political factors, the City Council has to be concerned with achieving a targeted number of affordable houses. Provided that land use policy and the city development plan are unchanged, the options for the future of the council housing

---

<sup>1</sup> International Council on Monuments and Sites is an international, a non-governmental organization concerning conservation of the cultural property.

involve either (i) the decision to conserve and to refurbish existing houses or (ii) demolition and replace with new houses. This well-defined context enables this thesis to focus on the relevance of each criterion to the City Council's decisions on the refurbishment and on demolition of the redundant housing. The findings will also reveal the difference between perceptions of value of the Housing Committee, the mainstreams and the pressure group for conservation of 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage.

## **2.2. Ordinary 20th century social mass-housing**

The Edinburgh City Council has long been attempting to deal with problems such as the housing shortage, slum clearance, and the improvement of housing standards. Both demolition and conservation were employed as a means to solve these problems in inner city areas and around dock sites. Slum areas were demolished and new social housing was built. After World War II, the scale of house building had increased in accordance with social and economic demands, and the political climate. In Scotland, the enormous scale of development was the result of a synergy with an enormous impact on urban structure and the people life. Many vital factors simultaneously became available such as construction technology, the modern movement in architecture, a utopian social agenda and acceptable housing standards. The modern movement had a significant impact on the forms of housing, the structure of urban residential areas, population distribution and city expansion.

In Edinburgh, the housing shortage during the post-war period was an ongoing problem rather than a destructive result of the war. The problem was exacerbated by the depression of the 1930s and resources directed to the war effort. There was a desperate need for housing improvement. Housing became a key issue in the post-war agenda of the political parties. Political propaganda promised to improve living conditions for Edinburgh people, especially the poor who had been living in substandard housing. From 1945 onwards, local government with support from the Central government undertook municipal intervention in house building and as a result, around the 1960s, becoming the largest house builder. Prototype buildings and Centralised planning were launched. House building was used in political campaigns with local politicians

promising a certain number of new houses to be built each year. Time scales and financial factors become ever more crucial for the municipal house builder if it was to keep its promises. In Edinburgh, one prominent figure in the campaign for social housing was Councillor Pat Rogan. His aim was to maximise house building by means of new technology. Both low-rise and high-rise housing often employed with advance methods of construction. An example of his influence is West Granton scheme-A which was built using the latest prefabrication system of the time (See chapter 3). Glendinning (1994) describes the scale of his political influence on housing building:

“Edinburgh had the largest ‘prefab’ estate in the country: 3,616 bungalows were demolished and replaced by 9,272 permanent houses, many in high blocks, by 1967...Accordingly, in his single term of office, ending in 1965, Rogan was able to treble the city’s programme: dwellings under contract seared from 960 to 2,363 by the following year.” (Glendinning and Muthesius, 1994, Tower Blocks, 237)

Architects of the time were faced with a new building programme, which required new standards of design, new industrialised methods of construction and materials. High-rise building was recognised as a form of housing, which had advantages when confronted with key problems such as scarcity of land and restricted costs and construction time. It also facilitated exceptionally high target numbers of housing units, which the politicians had made in their promises. Although the new high-rise housing estate is often associated with problems such as defective building details, and insufficient community facilities, it provided enough rooms for each family, hot tap water, a kitchen and an inside toilet. None of which they had in the overcrowded slums. The high-rise was a symbol of a better future as well as a solution to production targets. New construction methods were introduced, such as prefabrication including, prefab-aluminium houses and ‘no-fines’ concrete (a type of light weight concrete). They were the means to slum clearance on an enormous scale. Modern facilities such as lifts, central heating, and central waste-disposal collection introduced modern lifestyles. The situation was same throughout small and large burghs in Scotland as the whole housing industry was revolutionized.

An enormous amount of modern social housing was built in Edinburgh. But, resources for maintenance and management were incompatible with the scale of housing. The



problems were orchestrated by social exclusion and decline of the economy. The social housing estates eventually fell into deep decline. Housing problems related to the deteriorating conditions of buildings, antisocial residents, drugs abuse and crime and the loss of a sense of community. Problems were reported as severe and persistent and mostly concentrated in high-rise buildings. Similar problems were however found in many medium and low-rise housing estates. In the late 1970s, rejection of the modern social housing emerged in the public perception. These buildings were branded as ugly, eyesores and troublesome. Attitudes towards living in some social housing estates became extremely negative as a result of publicised cases of social problems. In such problematic housing estates, large numbers of housing units were unoccupied for a long period and eventually had become redundant. There are numerous causes of redundant 20<sup>th</sup> century council housing and it is difficult to pinpoint exactly the extent to which different factors contribute to the problem.

Changes in Housing Policy in the UK, to some extent, contributed to the increasing number of redundant social mass housing. From 1979, the Conservative government, under Margaret Thatcher, reduced public expenditure on social housing.<sup>1</sup> As a result, the local housing authorities had to change their role from housing provider to supporter of private sector house builders. Instead of building houses, the local authority now encouraged and supported private sector investment in house building. The housing estates in this study underwent this process of privatisation in which the estates were transferred to Housing Associations,<sup>2</sup> and charitable housing organisations. From the early 1980s, the number of social housing units was reduced considerably. One contributor was the Housing Act 1980 and the Tenant's Right to Buy Act which gave council tenant statutory right to buy the freehold of their house or a 125 years lease on their flat.<sup>3</sup> In Scotland, around 250, 000 social houses were sold by the end of 1991.<sup>4</sup> The outcome of the policy was the change in the type of housing tenure from public

---

<sup>1</sup> Balchin, I., and Rhoden, M., ed., *Housing: the essential foundation* (London, Routledge, 1998), 50.

<sup>2</sup> Housing Association is a non-profit organisation supported by the government but it is managed by residents in corporation with local housing authorities.

<sup>3</sup> Balchin, I., and Rhoden, M., ed., *Housing: the essential foundation* (London, Routledge, 1998), 67.

<sup>4</sup> Murie, Wainwright and Anderson, "Empty public sector dwellings in Scotland" (The Scottish Office, 1994, photocopied), 7.

sector to owner occupation. Changes in tenure also had impact on social structure of the housing estates. Privatised housing estates were managed by resident groups incorporation with the local housing authorities. After privatisation, many housing estates became accommodation for a certain economic class of tenants, who were able to afford to buy the social housing. Some housing associations also had control over the admission of new residents. This was to prevent 'problematic people' from living in the area. The changes in tenure proved a successful solution in most problematic housing estates including Craigmillar Castle Road, Niddrie House, and West Pilton. The remaining council housing was but a small proportion of the previous total. For example, of the 600 housing units in Niddrie House estate, only 54 refurbished houses remained as Council Housing after the rehabilitation project in 1991. This remaining council property was meant to aid the most deprived and the homeless. According to Balchin and Rhoden, house purchases in the UK declined around the mid 1980s. To some extent, it was believed that most of the good quality housing stock had been sold. The remaining housing stock was substandard and located in the so-called 'No Go' areas, in another word, deprived and unsafe residential areas.

Although the Edinburgh City Council attempted to refurbish the council housing to make it more habitable, the problems persisted. Due to deficit funding for repair and maintenance, the City Council did not carry out maintenance for unoccupied houses, which resulted in unattractive buildings which 'then become unacceptable by the occupants and eventually dangerous and consequently uninhabitable'.<sup>1</sup> In addition, this problem was worsened by the extra cost of emergency maintenance stemming from persistent vandalism of unoccupied houses. Such situations often occurred in the 'No Go' housing estates in which poverty and social problems were concentrated. To some extent, the privatisation of housing had contributed to the concentration of low-income and problematic residents and, as a result, the remaining council housing fell into a vicious circle of social problems.

---

<sup>1</sup> Balchin, I., and Rhoden, M., ed., *Housing: the essential foundation* (London, Routledge, 1998), 189

Around the end of the 1980s, the City Council began demolition to eradicate housing problems. Tweedmuir and Teviotbank were the first twin tower blocks demolished by explosives in Edinburgh (detailed in Chapter 4). Generally, the reasons given for demolition were; technical defects, defective architectural design features lack of facilities, long term vacancy, poor environments and landscape, and economically unviable future of the housing. Duration of vacancy was a decisive criterion for making housing redundant. This indicator, however, must be considered in conjunction with reletting rate (turnover rate)<sup>1</sup> and differing characteristics of tenures. In smaller properties, the turnover rates tend to be higher than in others<sup>2</sup> because tenants are mostly students and young people who only need short-term accommodation. The turnover rate for family that are 2, 3 and 4 apartment are expected to be lower, and a high rate of turnover would indicate that the properties may be undesirable. According to a report on empty public sector dwellings, ages and design were indicators of popular demand. Murie, Wainwright and Anderson writes:

“The most common factors identified with the uneven spread of voids is dwelling age and design with reference to flats, including 1960s flats, post war high-rise flat, early post war 3/4 storey tenements in peripheral estates, interwar tenements and unmodernised 4 in a block flats in peripheral estates.”  
(Murie, Wainwright and Anderson, 1994, 18)

The report indicates that these social housing, which were situated in poor areas, had suffered from lack of repair and maintenance for many years and were eventually made redundant. Although some were the subject of regeneration programme, but most are awaiting demolition.

### 2.3. Method and Objectives of the Study

The thesis contains four case studies of the demolitions of 20<sup>th</sup> century council mass-housing in Edinburgh. The case studies simply address the question “*Why the housing was demolished?*”. The ‘reasons to demolish’ are absent from demolished buildings and are thus likely to be ‘critical reasons’ or ‘criteria’ for survival of the others. Therefore, the examination of the actual demolition-criteria will reveal the way which the City

---

<sup>1</sup> Turnover rate is the frequency of change of tenants in one property.

<sup>2</sup> Murie, Wainwright and Anderson, Report on Empty public sector dwellings in Scotland, (The Scottish Office, 1994, photocopied), 20

Council considered three categories of reasons when dealing with ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century council housing.

The case studies will identify decision-making criteria and examine them in order to pinpoint the decisive criterion and the way other criteria contribute to the decision. As discussed, critical reason is the key answers of the why-question. Consequently, it will help to provide hindsight into the City Council's perception of value and the way in which formulated the why-question. To conclude, the objectives of this study are:

- 1) to identify decision-making criteria used by the City of Edinburgh Council,
- 2) to formulate a common pattern of the way the City Council considered the criteria in order to identify
  - a. decisive criteria
  - b. categorisation of the criteria identified
  - c. the roles of reason in the decision making

The case studies are undertaken from historical approach. They include data that provide insight into public perception of value of the council housing and changes in the opinions during the buildings life time. This group of data were collected from the Housing Press Cutting Collection, the Edinburgh Room of the Edinburgh Central Library. The Edinburgh Room provides an excellent collection of housing press-cutting covering the period of the early the 20<sup>th</sup> century till today. The case studies also comprise interviews with accessible people and visual assessment of the current status of the housing estates studied.

The key data is the criteria used by the decision maker, which include various Committees of the Edinburgh City Council. This information comes from the minutes of the meetings of the Housing Committee, the Planning Committee, and other committees responsible for a variety of issues related to social housing. A collection of the minutes of the meetings also includes reports by the Director of Housing on the issue of housing estates. This crucial group of information provides hard-evidence indicating the reasons and factors which lead to final decisions. The evidence was

collected from Edinburgh City Archive.<sup>1</sup> The resulting data was scrutinised and compared in examining line of reasons involved in each case study. The conclusions for each case study will be compared and synthesised in the final conclusion.

## **2.4. Introduction to the case studies**

The four case studies are chronologically arranged. The sequential events presented in the case studies demonstrate a changing social and economic context reflected in perception of value and the actual criteria used. The study selected four samples from demolished council mass-housing estates, each representative of its type including the tenement of the 1930s, the high-rise of the 1950s, the demolition of prefab housing built in 1960s and the mixed development of the early 1970s. These periods cover significant movements in housing development in Edinburgh.

The case studies in chapter 3, 4 and 5 are directed by the question “Why was the housing demolished?” looking at the relevant criteria in the pattern of decision making. Chapter 6 is a comparative analysis of the decision-making criteria, which are mentioned in the previous chapters. It illustrates how the criteria were employed to deal with the future of two housing estates of almost identical design.

Chapter 3 examines the decision to demolish low and medium rise social mass housing -West Granton Scheme-A. This Modern social housing estate was unique because, in Edinburgh, it was the only modern housing complex that had high-level walkway. This housing estate was built in 1965 under a package-deal contract. The West Granton Scheme-A was demolished in 1995, just 30 years after its completion. The decision-making process began with initial investigation of housing problems in 1983 with the actual demolition undertaken in 1995. The process took 12 years.

Chapter 4 is a case study of the demolition of Niddrie Marischal Policies, better known as Niddrie House. This focuses on the demolition of Teviotbank and Tweedmuir Houses, twin tower blocks situated at the centre of Niddrie House Estate. Shortly, after

---

<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh City Archive is located in the Edinburgh City Chambers

the successful redevelopment of the West Granton area, Edinburgh City Council approached the housing problems of Niddrie House from a radical perspective. It considered a proposal for comprehensive redevelopment of the area. The key element of the redevelopment was the demolition of Tweedmuir and Teviotbank. These were the first twin tower blocks to be demolished by explosive in Scotland. Ironically, one of them refused to collapse when the explosion took place. Low-rise houses underwent rehabilitation in the early 1990s. The case study also assesses the result of the rehabilitation project in 2001, and attempted to clarify various factors, related to problems in social housing.

Chapter 5 is a case study of the demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses, the first twin tower blocks built in Scotland. Grampian and Cairngorm houses were an award-winning designs for housing development of 1957, one year after completion of the now infamous housing Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis, USA.<sup>1</sup> The decision-making process began in 1985 when the City Council assigned an engineering company to investigate the structural condition of the twin towers. The actual demolition took place in 1997, 12 years after this process commenced. During the decision making process, there was a proposal to refurbish the twin towers as a hotel by a private developer. Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland also requested that Historic Scotland should list the twin towers as architectural heritage. However, neither the decision to conserve nor the hotel proposal was realised and the buildings were demolished. This chapter investigates why the City Council decided to demolish the buildings.

Chapter 6 is a case study of the criteria for the City Council's decisions on two 1930s estates. It aims to examine the reasons given for the decision to conserve/refurbish social housing designed by Ebenezer James MacRae, Edinburgh chief city architect. Two of his low-rise housing estates of the 1930s were selected; Craigmillar Castle Road Estate and Piershill Square. These two estates were designed with Modern planning; however they were of traditional appearance with pitch roof. The building plans for both estates were almost identical. Piershill Square estate was refurbished in 1990-

---

<sup>1</sup> The demolition of Pruitt-Igoe, on March 16<sup>th</sup> 1972, is considered a landmark event in the rejection of the Modern Movement in architecture.

1995. Despite its traditional appearance, the City Council decided to demolish Craigmillar Castle Road. The demolition programme was still underway progress in 2002. Comparison of two identical estates, in different conditions and location, may shed further light on the criteria on which the decisions were based.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **The Decision to demolish West Granton Scheme A**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter is a case study aiming to examine the decision about the redevelopment of the West Granton housing area, focusing on the demolition of West Granton scheme A. West Granton Housing estate was a 'deck-access' mass social housing, built during the 1960s in the north of Edinburgh. This housing was part of a project to redevelop temporary housing in West Pilton. The Housing Committee of the Edinburgh City Council aimed to use an industrialised system of building, which was new at that time. In order to minimise unknown risks, the Housing Committee divided the redevelopment project into schemes A and B. They resolved that the industrialised system was to be applied on scheme A. Both schemes had the same architectural design concept, which was influenced by sociological idea for modern living. They composed of large open-spaces. Every flat was laid out to have access to direct sunlight. The flats were equipped with modern conveniences such as hot and cold water, inside toilets and central heating. A distinctive characteristic of both schemes was a high-level walkway which was to facilitate communication between neighbours in the upper floor flats. In terms of residential building design, West Granton scheme A was unique within the city of Edinburgh as being medium-rise housing estate which had high level walkway integrated into its structure.

It was previously believed that low and medium-rise housing was the least problematic form of mass housing, especially when compared to high-rise flats. Both schemes could



be classified as medium rise residential buildings, however they had experienced many problems similar to high-rise residential buildings, for example, noise pollution, misuse of communal areas, and vandalism. These problems persisted for a long period and led West Granton into decline. Around the mid 1980s, Edinburgh District Council considered possibility for refurbishments of West Granton housing schemes. A feasibility study of scheme B suggested economic viability of its refurbishment, however, opposite result was reported for scheme A. Consequently, the District Council made initial decisions to refurbish scheme B and inclined to make the decision to demolish scheme A. Despite its economic viability, scheme B was also demolished in 1992.<sup>1</sup> The demolition of scheme B was not included in this study because the decision was likely to be a result of complex urban regeneration process. At that time, the Housing Committee were preparing a proposal for 'North Edinburgh Area Renewal' project (NEAR), which was intended for regenerations of North Edinburgh area as a whole. This case study aims to identify the criteria by which the initial decision to demolish scheme A was made. This particular focus enables the study to examine criteria from building perspective rather than those of urban regeneration.

## **3.2. Background of the West Granton Housing Schemes**

### ***3.2.1. Redevelopment of the West Pilton Temporary Housing Area***

The West Granton housing scheme was initially called "Redevelopment of West Pilton Temporary Housing Area", and was one of various redevelopments of existing housing areas mushroomed in Edinburgh during the 1960s. The West Pilton temporary housing was built to solve the housing shortage resulting from World War II. At that time, building construction industry had great problems with the labour shortage and lack of conventional housing materials such as timber, brick and copper.<sup>2</sup> Hollow pre-cast concrete was a substitute for timber. All piping used only steel as finishing due to the lack of copper. Despite all these difficulties, this temporary housing area was successful. Dr. Van Rood, a visiting housing director who worked for the Netherlands Government, said that the experience of Edinburgh in this particular scheme could

---

<sup>1</sup> Houses number 1-54 at West Granton View were demolished on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1992

<sup>2</sup> Evening News and Dispatch (Edinburgh), undated, Edinburgh Central City Library.

provide a template for rebuilding houses for Dutch people.<sup>1</sup> Until the 1960, the West Pilton temporary housing had been a satisfactory residential area.

In 1962, the Housing Committee and the Housing Corporation for Edinburgh (later Scottish Homes) had an aim of replacing temporary housing areas with permanent houses of better performance and to relieve the huge demand for social housing. High density residential area was a common solution employed during that period in order to cope with the scarcity of land for residential. In practice, house builders – both local government and private sectors – became adept in identifying under-used or vacant sites within urban area for housing development.<sup>2</sup> The redevelopment of West Pilton temporary housing area seems to stem of this development trend.

*Edinburgh, 6th November 1962.*—At a meeting of the Special Sub-Committee on Housing Policy of the Housing Committee.

Present :—Councillor Rogan; Bailie Morgan; Councillors Theurer, Wallace and Swanson.

1. With reference to item 1 of minute of the Sub-Committee of 25th September 1962, there was submitted report, dated 2nd November 1962, by the Depute City Architect for Housing regarding alternative methods of tendering for the redevelopment of West Pilton, Muirhouse South (previously referred to as Drylaw Mains North) and Saughton Mains temporary housing areas and suggesting that the arrangements now proposed for redevelopment of further temporary housing sites should also include the sites at Southfield (8.9 acres) and Colinton Mains (13.6 acres). Redevelopment of temporary housing areas.

The City Architect was also heard.

The Sub-Committee resolved to recommend :—

- (a) that the programme now to be undertaken for the redevelopment of temporary housing areas should cover the areas at West Pilton, Muirhouse South, Saughton Mains, Southfield and Colinton Mains;
- (b) that George Wimpey & Co. Ltd. be selected as contractors for the redevelopment of the Muirhouse South area;

**Figure 3. 1** Various existing housing sites were being redeveloped to make way for 'permanent housing' [3-1]

<sup>1</sup> Evening News and Dispatch (Edinburgh), undated, Edinburgh Central City Library.

<sup>2</sup> Balchin, P. and Rhoden, M., ed., *Housing the essential foundation* (London, Routledge, 1998), 133.

During the 1960s in Edinburgh, it is obvious that local politician had a great influence on the development of social housing. The redevelopment of the West Pilton temporary housing was under the political influence of Pat Rogan, chairman of the Housing Committee at that time. Councillor Rogan's aspiration was to solve problems related to slums and the serious housing shortage in Edinburgh. He was an influential figure and was enthusiastic about the application of modern construction methods to house-building.<sup>1</sup> With many new industrialised system of building available, Councillor Rogan and the Housing Committee were searching for the most cost effective and timesaving construction method. In 1962, the Housing Committee resolved that the redevelopment of the West Pilton temporary housing was to be built with an industrialised construction system and that a feasibility study of the system be carried out.

Present:—Councillor Rogan; Bailie Morgan; Councillors McKay, Swanson, Wallace and Theurer.

1. Reference was made to the decisions of the Committee to include a substantial measure of industrialised building in the redevelopment of the West Pilton temporary housing area and to appoint Messrs Eric W. Hall & Partners as appointed architects for the purposes of this redevelopment.

The Chairman referred to a report which had now been received from the appointed architects in regard to industrialised systems of building and their relation to the West Pilton redevelopment, and to the visit on 5th June which members of the Committee had paid to Birmingham to obtain further information on the reasons why the Corporation of Birmingham had decided not to proceed with a large housing development by a system of this type.

After discussion, the Sub-Committee were of opinion that the Committee should adhere to the principle that the Corporation should undertake some proportion of industrialised house building in the future and that an experiment in the industrialised construction of multi-storey building might be undertaken on one or two small sites. In present circumstances, however, and particularly in the light of the difficulty of obtaining precise information on questions which were fundamental in considering the use of industrialised systems, such as price, overall time of construction and design, it was not felt to be appropriate to undertake redevelopment using such systems in the West Pilton site. It was also in the minds of the Sub-Committee that the use of such a system in a temporary housing site might necessarily involve a much larger initial clearance of temporary houses than under

Figure 3. 2 Housing Committee approved in principle of prefabrication system for redevelopment of the West Pilton temporary housing [3-2]

<sup>1</sup> Glendinning, Miles and Stefan Muthesius, *Tower Blocks*, (London, Yale University Press, 1994), 237.

Edinburgh Housing Corporation had discovered that the proposed industrialised system might have had disadvantages because Birmingham Housing Corporation had previously cancelled the use of this system on one of its housing projects. In the 1960s, Birmingham Housing Corporation was at the forefront of house building and had extensive experience using both full and semi-industrialised system. The Housing Committee assigned the deputy city architect and the appointed architect of the West Pilton redevelopment project, to visit Birmingham in order to investigate the reasons for the cancellation of their prefabrication housing project. According to the minute of meeting of the housing committee held on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1963, the architects reported that no precise information had been obtained as being concerned with price and the overall time of construction and design. Without there being explicit reasons, the Housing Committee decided to experiment with the system. However, they rescinded their decision on substantial scale of the industrialised housing investment. The final programme for redevelopment of the West Pilton temporary housing area was to use the industrialised system of building on scheme A and to use conventional construction process for scheme B. Scheme A was assigned to W. Loudon & Son Ltd., an architectural firm and Hart Brothers Builders Ltd. as contractor. Scheme B was assigned to Mr. Eric W. Hall, an architectural firm.

*Edinburgh, 13th November 1962.*—At a meeting of the Special Sub-Committee on Housing Policy of the Housing Committee.

Present :—Councillors Rogan, Theurer, Wallace and Swanson,

1. Reference was made to item 1 of minute of the Sub-Committee of 6th November 1962.

(a) The Sub-Committee, having heard a report by the Depute City Architect for Housing, resolved to recommend approval in principle of a substantial measure of industrialised building being included in the redevelopment of the West Pilton temporary housing area and instructed the Depute City Architect for Housing to report on the most suitable type of this form of housing that could be used in the area.

**Figure 3.3** the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1963 [3-3]

The Housing Committee also prepared to use a 'Package Deal' contract for the redevelopment of West Pilton Temporary Housing area. The package deal was a form of negotiated contract practiced widely during the 1960s among local housing authorities. The contractor carried out all the process of house-building – that is from design to construction process. One aspect of the contract was to ensure that a contractor would carry out the entire job up to the completion of the last phase. Glendinning and Muthesius note that private house builders moved out of municipal work into more profitable industrial or commercial buildings.<sup>1</sup> Such a contract had come to be considered by local housing authorities since the forties and early fifties when the authorities often received no reply to their invitation of tender because the invitations were excessively demanding while labour and construction material was still in short supply. 'Package deal' offered the contractors the full authority in decision making on the process of house building, including architectural and engineering design and construction process. In this way, the contractor had a control over cost and time scale of housing building by using in-house staff. In turn, they may make profits from working for local housing authorities. Viewed in this way, the package deal contract seemed to be sensible solution but some housing authorities adopted the package deal contract as an aid to achieve high production targets. If the contractors were incompetent, quality of the housing can be severely compromised.

The architects of both schemes were approached by the Housing Committee to consider the acceptance of a package deal contract. W. Loudon & Son Ltd agreed to the proposal. On the contrary, the proposal was rejected by Mr Eric Hall. In the minute of the meeting held on July 16<sup>th</sup> 1963, Mr Eric Hall explained his reasons for the rejection saying that the subordination of the planning and design function was contrary to accepted good professional practice and to the client's own best interest (see figure 3.4). He insisted on a rigorous standard of professional practice for scheme B regardless of whether the scheme B was to be built with the industrialised or traditional system. The Housing Committee accepted the reasons and resolved that the scheme B would

---

<sup>1</sup> Glendinning, M. and Muthesius S., *Tower Blocks*, (London, Yale University Press, 1994)

proceed under an appropriate contractual arrangement in consultation with the city architect.

1. With reference to item 8 (a) of minute of the Committee of 9th July 1963, the Sub-Committee had under consideration a letter (which had been circulated), dated 5th July 1963, from Messrs Eric Hall & Partners, Architects, intimating, in connection with the Corporation's proposals for the redevelopment of West Pilton temporary housing area by negotiated contract that, while they welcomed negotiated contracts and close discussions with contractors at the design stage, they considered that a position in which the planning and design functions were subordinated to the contractor's was contrary to accepted good professional practice and to the client's own best interest. They had understood, on their appointment as architects for the project, that, while they were limited meantime to preparing a layout, a "package deal" was not intended and that, in normal circumstances, they would act as architects for the complete scheme whether built by industrialised or more traditional means. They had, in fact, set aside senior staff for this purpose and recruited additional qualified assistants who were now available for the work. Unless their appointment could be modified in the way they had indicated to be necessary for good professional practice, they were unable to accept the commission.

Figure 3. 4 shows Mr Eric W Hall's reasons for rejecting package deal contract for scheme B [3-4]

The redevelopment of the West Pilton Temporary Housing began in 1964. The Housing Committee decided to rename the new housing estates West Granton because West Pilton had been extensively used and often caused confusion. Hence the redevelopment schemes A and B become known as West Granton housing estate, scheme A and B.

### 3.2.2. *The West Granton Housing Schemes*

The design of West Granton scheme A was approved and building construction was granted on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1964.<sup>1</sup> The scheme was completed in 1967. Scheme A comprised West Granton Terrace, -Row, -Drive, -Green, -Place and -Crescent. The West Granton housing area was adjunct to West Granton Road, from which the name of

<sup>1</sup> Minute of Meeting of Housing committee, (Edinburgh City Archive), 13 November 1964



the schemes derived. On the south side of the schemes was West Pilton Circus. Pennywell Road was on the west. West Granton schemes were of mixed tenures such as elderly people, single residents and families with children. Most of large flats were maisonettes. Due to the occurrence of social problems in many modern housing estates, Edinburgh Housing Corporation had a heightened awareness of how design influences the quality of people's lives. The design concept for West Granton was to encourage personal health and strong community. This concept emphasized the relationships between the residents, hygienic conditions, maximum daylight, large open space, and density suitable to the urban area. Attention was also paid to the basic demands, such as laundries, waste disposal, neighbourhood and recreational area. Ramps were provided so that the first floor could accommodate the elderly and people with disabilities. The high-level walkway linked the buildings together, offering opportunities for the neighbour on the upper floor to become acquainted with each other.



**Figure 3. 5** An aerial view of West Granton housing estates and West Pilton Circus in early 1991 [3-5]

### 3.2.3. *West Granton Scheme A*

West Granton scheme A was a complex of five-storey deck-access buildings with flat roofs. A striking characteristic of the scheme was the vertical cubiform. The cubiform had different heights and different window compositions. The repetition of the long horizontal main building created a rhythmic pattern against the skyline. The scheme was regarded as unique within Edinburgh since it was the only housing estate built with integrated high level walkways. The layout of West Granton scheme A resembled one complex building but each wing of the complex was structurally separate. The high-level walkway was integrated into the buildings which gave Scheme A its unique appearance. The upper floor flats were set back to accommodate walkways on the first and second level. The external and internal loadbearing walls were calculated brickworks. The actual structure of scheme suggests that the buildings were not built with fully industrialised system as being originally intended.

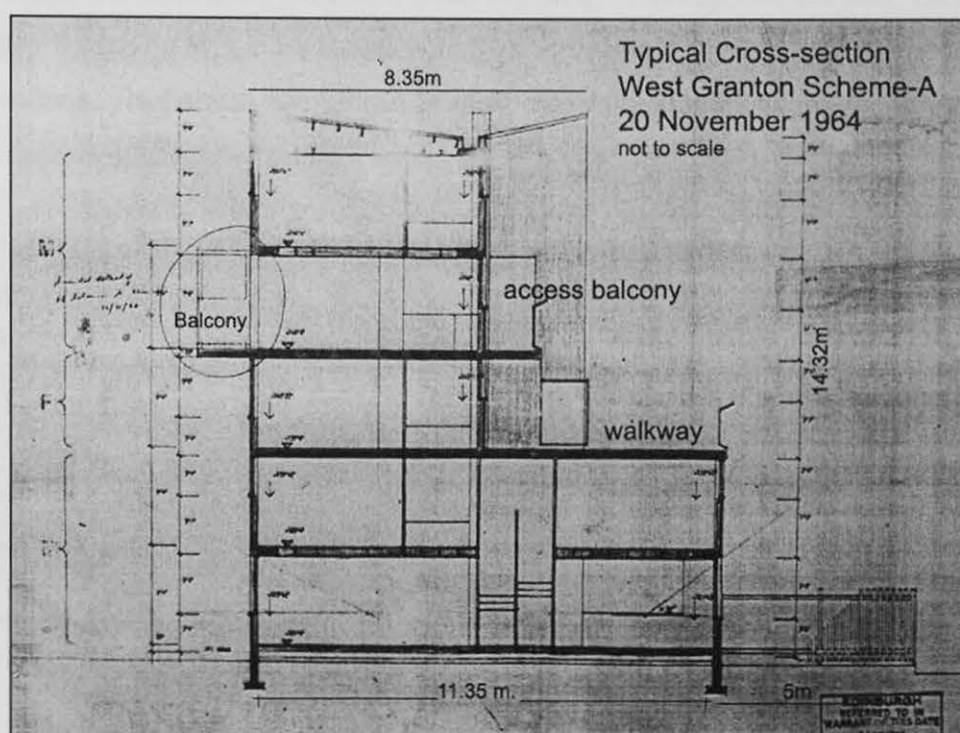


Figure 3.6 Cross section West Granton scheme-A [3-6]



The finish to the internal loadbearing wall was 3/8" plasterboard joints filled & taped. The external Non-loadbearing walls were 3 1/2" 'Thermalite' with galvanised metal tied to 3" x 2" 'Tanalised' timber frame. The outer face of the frame had foil-backed buildings paper sheathing. The finish to the external load bearing wall was 3/8" insulated plasterboard. The finish to the external non-loadbearing wall was 3/8" insulated plasterboard with joints and taped. The external finish composed of 2 coats of rendering. The 1<sup>st</sup> coat was 1:1:6 (cement/lime/sand) and 2<sup>nd</sup> coat was 1:1:6 ('Snowcum'/lime/sand) and then finished with dry dash 'Ruff decarock', which was also applied to all external wall surfaces. Partitions were made of 2-1/2" Paramount plaster panels. The public stair was 'Bison' Precast concrete. The domestic stair was of timber. The windows and doors were of timber. The balcony was 5-1/2" 'Bison' cantilever unit. Ground floors were 13/16" T&G (tongue & groove) timber boards on 5" x 1 1/2" joists at 18" held by 4" x 1" wall plates. Double sided paper reinforced aluminium foil was used under joists and under boarding. The upper floors were 13/16" T&G timber boards on 8" x 1 1/2" joists with 8" x 7" dwangs. Double joists were used under partitions. Roof finish was 'Alcan Snaprib' sheet on bituminous felt on 1" water repellent insulating board.

The sizes of three-, four- and five-, apartment flats were are shown as follows.

Living Dining and Kitchen	279 - 305 sq.ft. / 25.11 - 27.45 sq.m
Bedroom	125 - 137 sq.ft. / 11.25 - 12.33 sq.m
Bathroom	40 sq.ft. / 3.6 sqm
External Drying Area	44 - 68 sq.ft. / 3.96 - 6.12 sq.m
General Storage	
External	236 cu.ft
Internal	100 cu.ft
Larder and Dry goods	60 cu.ft
Overall House Area for 3 Apartment	736 sq.ft / 66.24 sq.m
Overall House Area for 4 Apartment	844 sq.ft / 75.96 sq.m
Overall House Area for 5 Apartment	987 sq.ft / 88.83 sq.m

There were 515 houses composed of 134 two-apartment, 291 three-apartment, 85 four-apartment and 5 five-apartment flats. Most of two-apartment flats were located on ground floor and first floor to accommodate the elderly, single tenant or young couples. On the third-floor, four and five apartment flats had a balcony on the rear side. Five of five-apartment flats were two-storey freestanding buildings which were located on West Granton Row. These were flats for families with children. The architect attempted to separate large families from other groups, anticipating foreseeable problems such as noise pollution and playground needs.

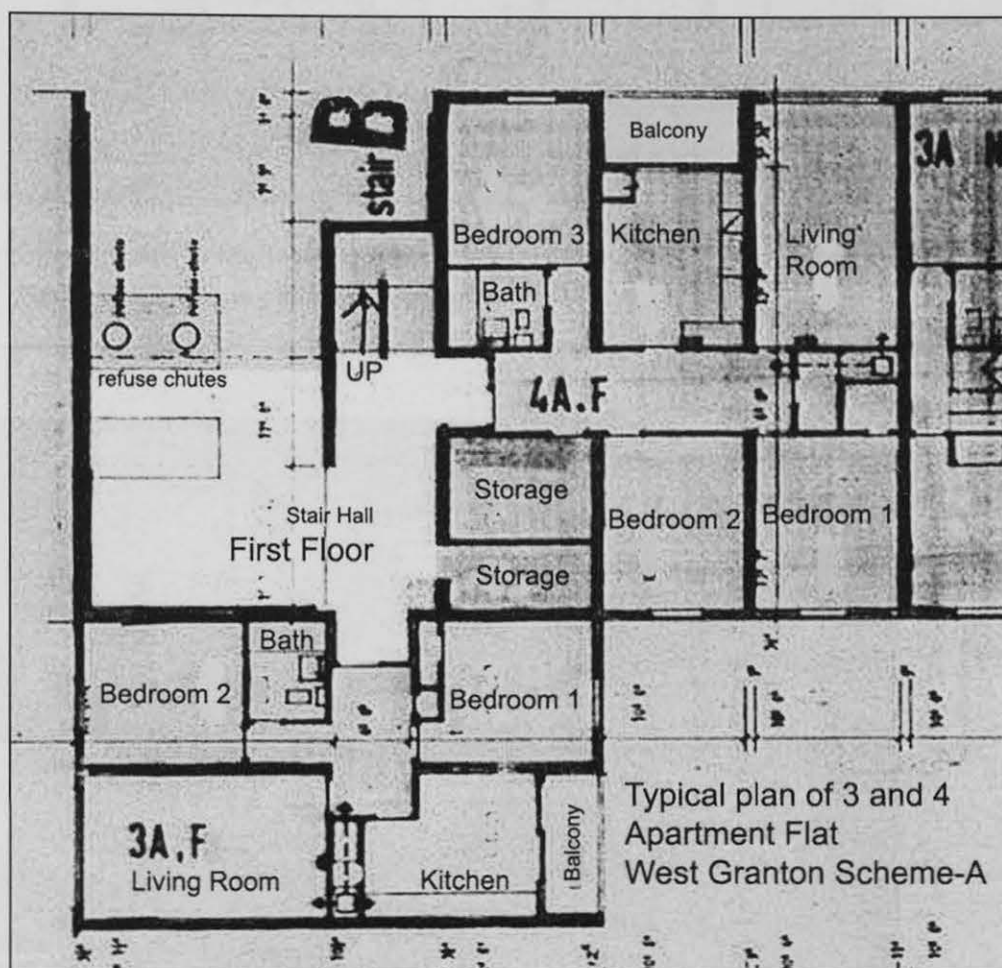


Figure 3.7 Typical floor plan of 3-and 4-apartment flats, West Granton scheme-A [3-7]

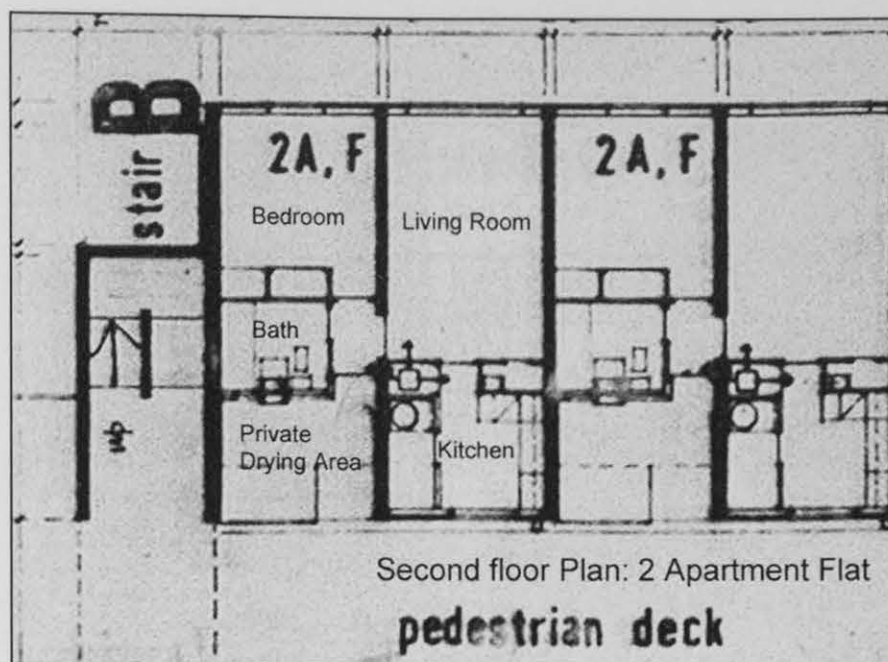
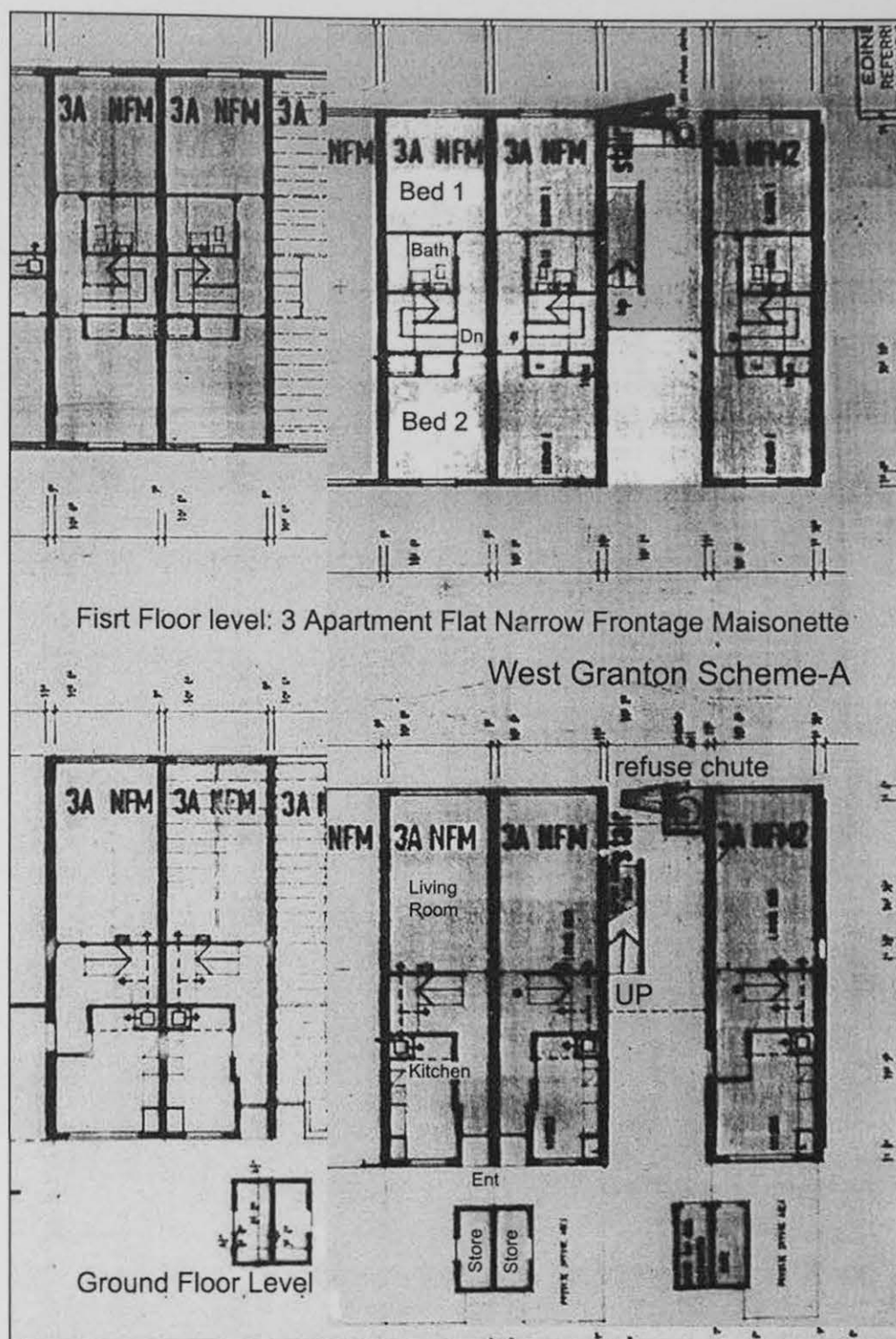


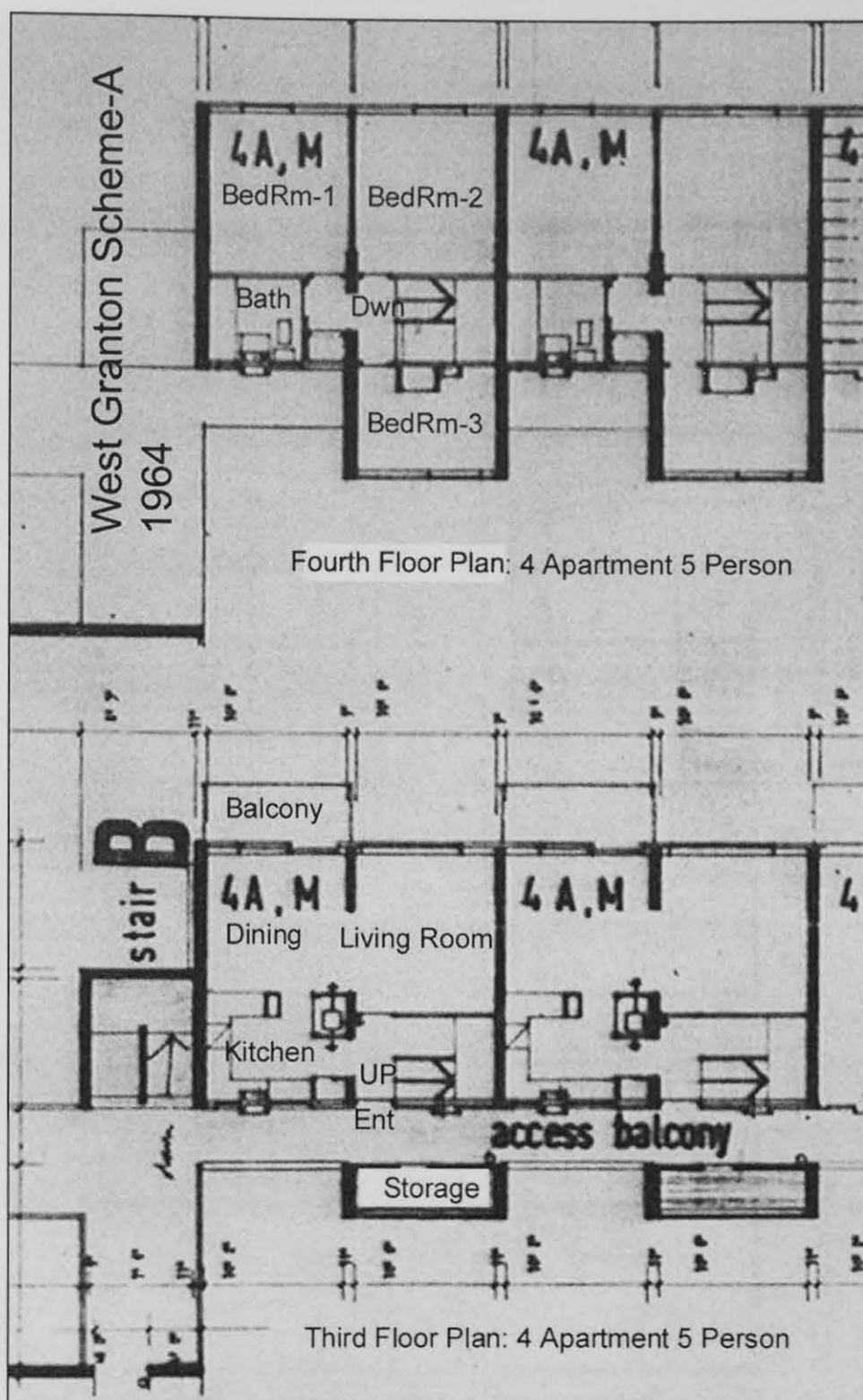
Figure 3.8 Typical plan of 2-apartment flat [3-8]



Figure 3.9 shows walkways on the upper floors, viewed from the courtyard of West Granton Crescent [3-9]



**Figure 3.10** Typical plan of 3 Apartment narrow frontage maisonettes, West Granton scheme-A [3-10]



**Figure 3.11** Typical plan of 4-apartment flats on third and fourth floor plans, West Granton Scheme-A [3-11]



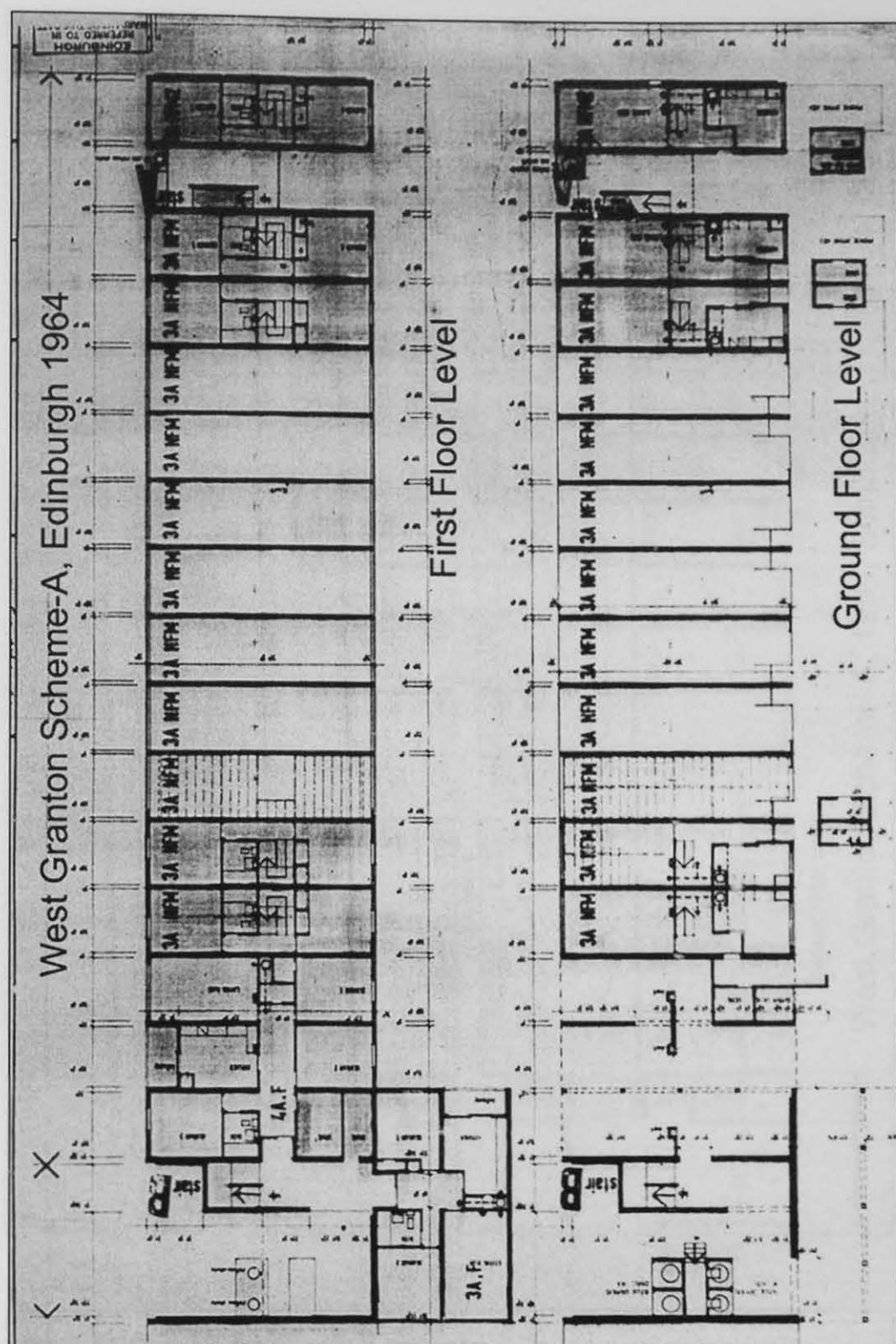


Figure 3.12 Typical layout of 3-apartment flat on ground and first floor level [3-12]

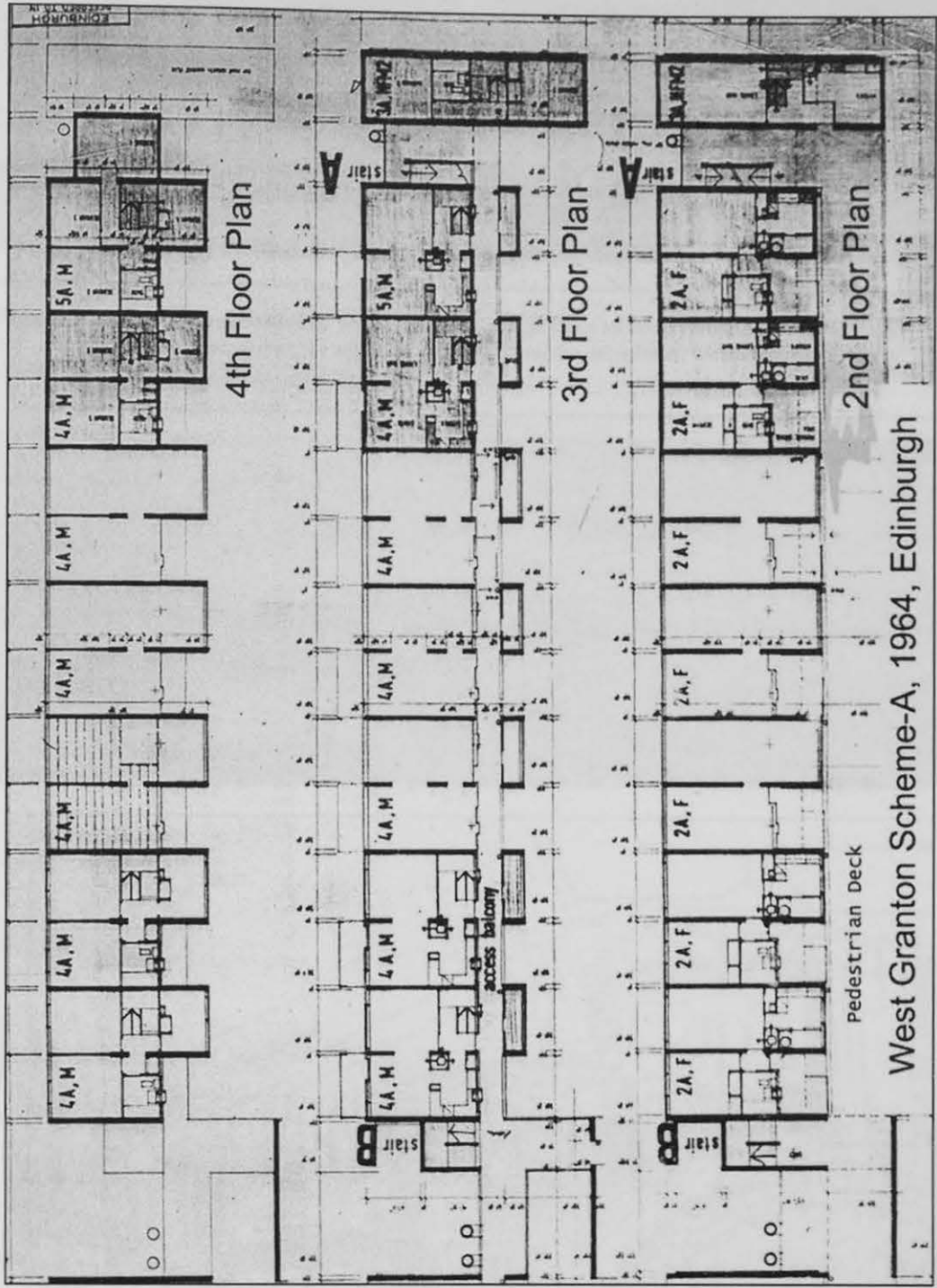


Figure 3.13 Typical layout of 2- and 4-apartment flats on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor level [3-13]



Figure 3. 14, above, shows views of West Granton Crescent from its courtyard in the early 1990s [3-14] Figure 3. 15, below, shows the south side of West Granton scheme-A, which had balconies on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in 1995 during its demolition. [3-15]

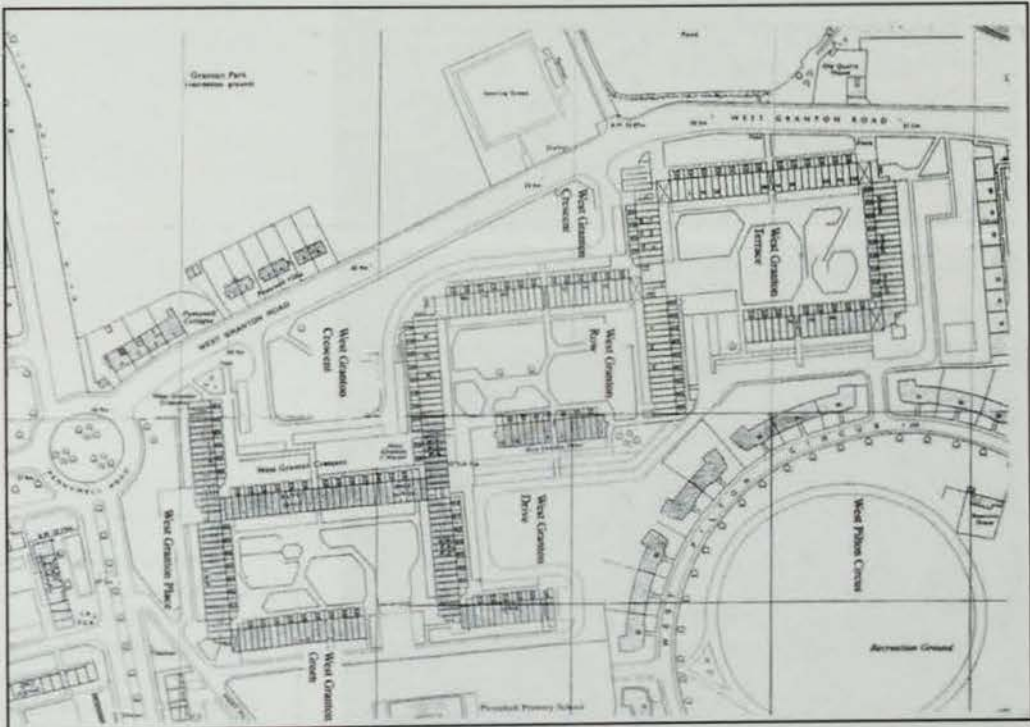
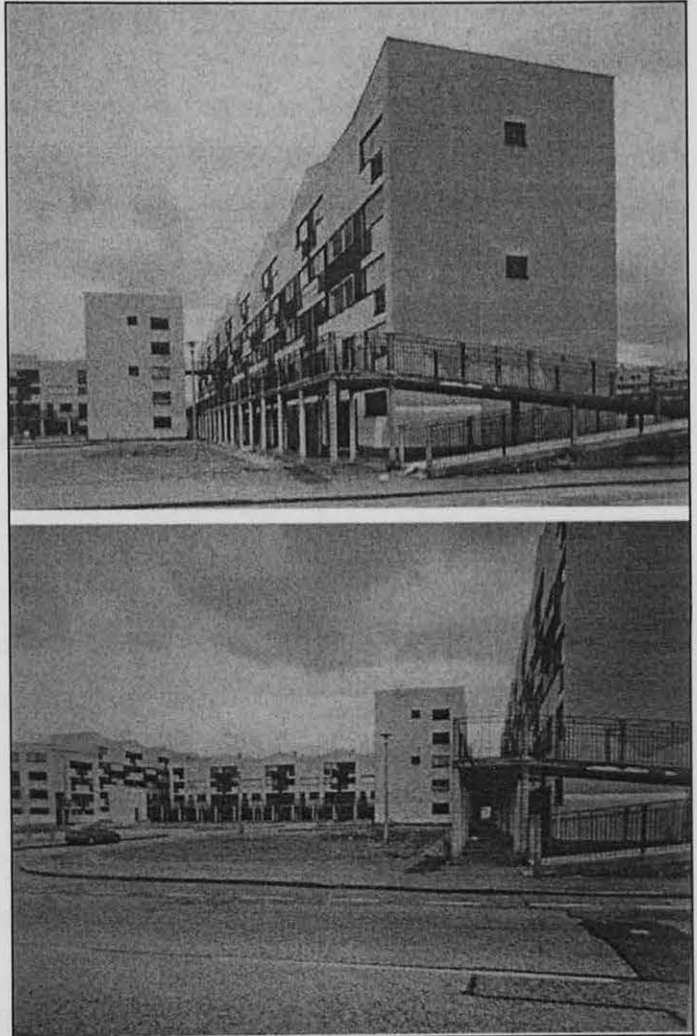


Figure 3. 16 Layout of West Granton Scheme-A [3-16]

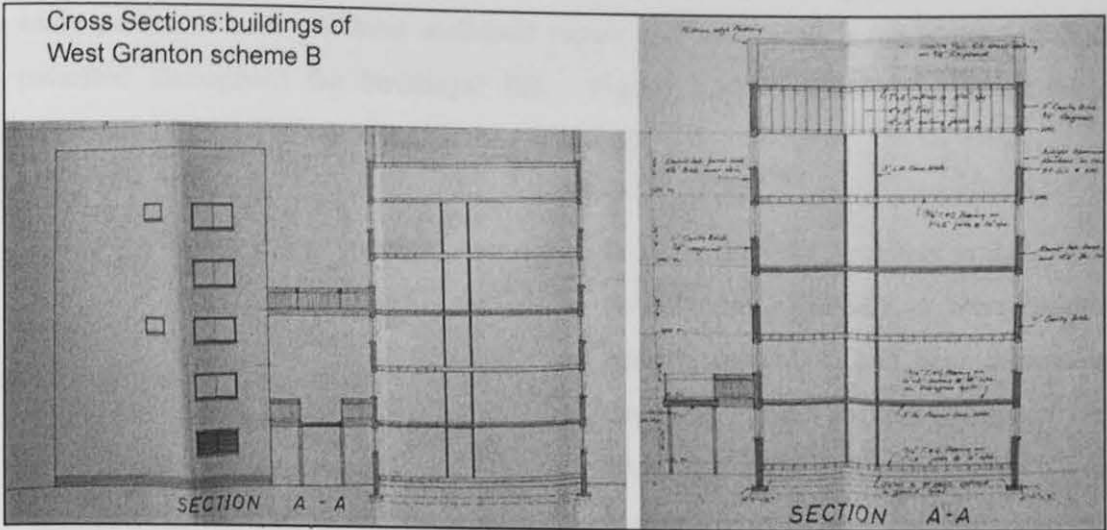


### 3.2.4. *West Granton Scheme B*

West Granton Scheme-B was built on a more traditional method. The buildings of scheme B were arranged in an irregular pattern to create open courtyards. The buildings had reinforced concrete foundations. On the ground floor, interior floors were of tongue and groove (T&G) timber flooring laid on timber joints. The floors of storage and drying areas were concrete, with asphalt as insulation. The floors between flats were made of precast reinforced concrete slabs laid over by fiberglass quilt and tongue & groove timber flooring. Mezzanine floor of the marionette was tongue & groove flooring. Asbestos sheeting was used on some part of the walls. Common stair was in-situ reinforced concrete. The building had pitch roof with parapet. The wall and cross wall consisted of brick and light weight concrete blocks. All the windows were airtight aluminum sliding sashes in timber sub frame. High-level walkways was attached to all the buildings rather than integrated into the building structure. The walkway was made of reinforced concrete slabs and reinforced concrete columns.



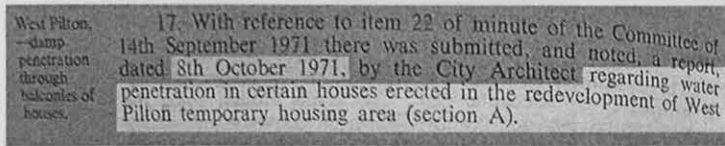
**Figure 3. 17** West Granton Scheme-B, above, the ramp for residents with disabilities was attached to the buildings and below views of one of the courtyards from West Granton Road [3-17]



**Figure 3.18** shows high-level walkways connecting flat buildings in West Granton scheme-B [3-18]

### 3.2.5. *The Decline of West Granton Scheme A*

During the 1970s, West Granton Scheme A began to have problems related to its structure and building service system. In 1971, five years after the scheme's completion, the City Architect reported that certain houses suffered from water penetration. Condensation and dampness were also one of serious problems within the



**Figure 3.19** Water penetration in certain houses of scheme-A was reported since 1971 [3-19]

estate. This resulted from the movement of structural components. Early sign of this problem were cracks on the external panels all over the buildings,

especially at the corners of windows and balconies on the rear side. Although the movement did not cause serious structural instability, it caused problems related to water penetration and dampness. When West Pilton Dampness Action Group requested £35,000 to solve the condensation problem, but the Housing Committee granted only £25,000 which would cover only 100 problematic houses out of a total of 137.<sup>1</sup> The Housing Committee did not anticipate any extra costs for repair and maintenance in the

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 28 January 1978

early period of use. Without sufficient repair and maintenance funds the problems persisted throughout the buildings' life. Figure 3.20 illustrates a sign of water penetration in a flat of scheme A in the early 1990s.



**Figure 3. 20** A sign of water penetration in West Granton scheme-A in the early 1990s [3-20]

In 1976, the City Architect undertook an investigation of dry rot in West Granton housing estate.<sup>1</sup> It had been discovered that gas flues located between the dividing walls of the flats were improperly installed. The flues were not jointed properly, gas fumes leaked into the gap between the flats. These flues ran through at least two houses before reaching the roof, as a result, one

defective joint affected many houses. The leaks caused condensation and led to dry rot, which infected the structure of timber floors all over the estate. Figure 3.21 illustrates the problems and cost in detail.



**Figure 3. 21**, left, shows a broken gas flue causing condensation and, right, dry rot spreading through the floor structure [3-21]

<sup>1</sup> Director of Housing, 'Report on Flues for gas heating and appliances', 15 June 1976.



During investigations into a report of dry rot in this area it was revealed that the flues from the various houses had been improperly installed and in many cases were leaking into the gap between the brickwork and the dry lining plaster board.

These flues are built into and form part of the dividing walls of the houses and in many cases run through at least two houses and sometimes three before reaching the roof. In all cases which have been exposed it has been found that they were not properly jointed and in some cases not lined up correctly. The fumes had then leaked into the gap described above causing condensation, with the result that the wood work has rotted and affected the whole of the lining. Photographs are available of some of the problems which have occurred. To remedy these faults has involved a lot of work and expense in that the framework and the plaster board linings of the walls and ceilings in at least two houses per flue have had to be cut out and an internal lining of gas ventilator tubing installed together with purpose made stainless steel jointing collars. After the installation had been smoke tested the walls had to be faced up with cement render, the walls and ceilings replaced and the rooms redecorated to the standard required in each house.

Up to the moment, five flues have had to be repaired in this way and the total expense is now £2,000. Investigations are continuing as there are 170 houses of the same type in the same area and they could all be affected in a similar manner. If it was found necessary to repair them all, the cost could amount eventually to £62,000.

**Figure 3. 22** , above, A detailed description of the gas flue problem in WesGranton scheme-A and, below, estimated cost of repair [3-22]

West Granton Scheme A was infamous for its undesirable living environment. Although there was a community group working towards improvement of the housing, this group was outnumbered by problematic residents. Multiple problems reoccurred and tended to persist. As seen in figure 3.24, vandalism was of serious concern. The parking space was unsafe. Burnt cars were left in the area for long period. There was graffiti everywhere, mostly in the staircases. The staircases and corridors were painted in 1973. By 1976 it was vandalised and had already fallen into a deplorable state, which residents would have to tolerate until 1981, when maintenance fund would become available. In a report by Director of Housing, dated June 15<sup>th</sup> 1976, it was

stated that the courtyards lacked necessary maintenance and being unusable.<sup>1</sup> Mothers would not allow their young children to play freely on these areas, because they were unsafe and also had dangerous items such as sharp materials, broken glasses, broken aluminium cans and faeces. Drying areas were located at the ground floor and clothes had often been stolen or damaged. Similar to other estates, the resident stopped using the areas because of the vandals and thieves. There was no community centre in the estate. The nearest centre was Craigroyston Community Centre, situated at the junction of Pennywell Road and Ferry Road. The Housing Committee was aware of these problems but seemed unable to rectify them. West Granton was also perceived as one of the worst places to bring up children. The residents, especially the elderly, were frightened to stay out after dark. Vandalism and petty crimes worsened and appeared to be increasingly serious.

### 1 Main Access Stairs

The main access stairs are used by the tenants not only to gain access to and from their particular flats but to obtain access along the high level walkways to other parts of the blocks. This applies to some extent also to members of the public moving from one point of the estate to another.

The access stairs are subjected to vandalism and graffiti. They were decorated within the 1973/74 paints programme and repainting is not scheduled until 1980/81. The treatment of stairs with anti-vandal paint would possibly improve matters as experiments in other parts of the estate have proved successful. However, the cost of such treatment would be more expensive than the normal application of paint to which would require to be added the additional costs of removing any graffiti applied thereafter.

Figure 3. 23 Report by the Direct of Housing and Cleansing, dated June 15<sup>th</sup> 1976 [3-23]

At the beginning, the Housing Committee was unaware that deck-access low-rise housing could be very difficult to manage. The Housing and Cleansing Department had difficulty with the maintenance of the walkways and staircases. A report by the Director of the Cleansing Department stated that the walkway demanded a degree of maintenance similar to the high-rise corridor and the current schedule for cleaning the stairs and high-level walkways was insufficient. Some of residents ignored their turns

<sup>1</sup> Joint-report by Director of Housing and Director of Cleansing, "West Granton estate - Multi Storey Street", 15 June 1976.

to clean the walkway at the front of their flats. Waste was left near the chute or bin which caused a disturbing smell. It was reported that some residents used the high-level walkways as a shortcut to other parts of the estate.<sup>1</sup> In some areas, the walkways were being used all the time. Many residents with flats situated near such areas complained about noise at night-time and especially during the weekend.

**THIS is the face of Edinburgh the tourists seldom see — an area plagued by drug pushers, vandalism and atrocious housing.**

**So bad are conditions in West Granton the people who live there call it West Beirut.**

But today residents were celebrating news that the notorious West Granton Crescent blocks are to be demolished.

A passionate plea for action has led

**by Ken Smart**

POLITICAL EDITOR

to a decision to flatten the flats and rehouse the residents.

Vandalism, fire raising, drug taking, flooding and break-ins are daily events, tenants' association chairman, Jim Mitchell, told the city's housing committee.

The 30-year-old scheme was originally nicknamed Alcatraz by residents who later mockingly christened it Legoland.

The tenants' deputation from West Granton arrived at the City Chambers with a piece of paper 30ft long illustrating the problems in their scheme and demanding action.

Mr Mitchell told the committee: "West Granton must be demolished. People do not want to live there. It is not safe."

"The threat of vandalism is such that no one feels safe any more. It's like living in a municipal refuse dump."

Mr Mitchell said many tenants had water dripping down their walls, one woman lived surrounded by empty houses, while another had a hole in her wall which went straight into a rubbish chute.

Some stairs have been without lighting for six months, yet the Capital Standards Charter says lights will be repaired within three hours.

West Granton was built 30 years ago and the deck access blocks have suffered from serious problems for many years. Part of the scheme has already been demolished to make way for housing co-operative homes and low cost home ownership units.

After bearing the deputation the committee agreed to put an immediate stop to all house lettings, to secure all the empty flats and to give West Granton tenants priority in rehousing in a number of areas.

■ The Prince of Wales is due in the area next month to launch NEAR, the North West Edinburgh Area Renewal scheme, aimed at improving housing conditions and creating new jobs, as well as bringing the environment up to scratch in some of Edinburgh's worst housing areas.

**Tenants' Joy — Page 3**

Figure 3. 24

A Evening Nws, 16 June 1993, report on social problems in West Granton scheme-A and opinions supporting its demolition [3-24]

Edinburgh public perceived West Granton as a socially deprived area. Large numbers of flats in these housing schemes were unoccupied. Ken Smart, a reporter for the Evening News, wrote that West Granton had long been in serious decline. Both schemes A and B had problems related to vandalism, drug-abuse, thieves and petty crimes. Vandalism was persistent and became intolerable, particularly in scheme B.

<sup>1</sup> Joint-report by Director of Housing and Director of Cleansing, "West Granton estate - Multi Storey Street", 15 June 1976.

Scheme A also had problems related to structural problems and functional performance of the building.<sup>1</sup> There is no report concerning the structural problems of scheme B.



No Fun: Children play on a burnt-out car in West Granton. Tenants say it's like living in a refuse dump, but at least the blocks are to vanish forever  
Evening News 16 June 1993

Figure 3. 25 shows children playing around a burnt car in West Granton Crescent (scheme A) reported in Evening News, June 16<sup>th</sup> 1993 [3-25]

## Tenants in housing setback

EN/19/93  
FAMILIES to be moved out of the notorious West Granton housing scheme in Edinburgh may have to wait up to two years to be rehoused.

Two months ago the 400 tenants were told that their homes will be demolished by the district council — and that the number of other schemes for relocation was to be extended.

But housing department officials are now saying that widening the choice could slow down the rehousing process.

Acting director of housing Angiolina Foster told the council's housing committee that as few as 50 low-rise houses became available in areas like Leith every year.

### Unrealistic

As a result, officials were now recommending that moves be limited to areas like Muirhouse, Pilton, Granton and Drylaw.

Tenants were reluctant to accept flats in multi-storey blocks, even in Leith, and, in an earlier rehousing exercise, only five out of 245 tenants moved had gone to high rise flats in Muirhouse or Pilton.

The possibility of a move to houses in Boswall, Newhaven and Craighall, where turnover of houses was slow, would unrealistic.

## Granton residents learn of new snag over council plans to find new homes



CHANGING FORTUNES: West Granton tenants celebrate hearing of the demolition in June (left) but news broken by acting director of housing Angiolina Foster looks set to dampen the residents enthusiasm.

by Ken Smart

NEWS REPORTER

cally raise the expectations of tenants, said Ms Foster.

West Granton tenants chairman Jim Mitchell said families to be moved did not want to be offered houses in areas that had the same

types of problem as West Granton.

He said: "We want to be moved to decent homes in a decent environment. We are not second class citizens to be dumped in sub-standard conditions."

"At the moment, as far as the council are concerned, a move back into new houses at West Granton is not an option for the

present tenants. We should at least be given the choice."

He added: "Demolition should take place sooner than later."

Ms Foster said: "As things are going at the moment, it will take two years to complete the rehousing programme. An extension of the areas for choice will lengthen that programme, not shorten it."

Figure3. 26 shows that the demolition process was carried out with uncertainty and did not give priority to the present community. [3-26]

<sup>1</sup>Evening News (Edinburgh), 16 June 1993



### 3.3. The Decision Making on the Demolition of Scheme A

In 1989, the Housing Committee was inclined to demolish West Granton scheme A and to redevelop the vacant land. It seems that the Housing Committee did not consider the possibility of refurbishment scheme A because the initial decision to demolish scheme A was taken without consultation with residents. According to Evening News September 1<sup>st</sup> 1993, the residents were informed in 1993 and at first understood that new housing would be built for them. They were disappointed when further information confirmed that they would be relocated to other areas but would have to wait up to 2 years before the housing reallocation programme began. In 1994, the Housing Committee of the Edinburgh District Council made a swift decision to demolish West Granton scheme A in order to include the vacant site in the West Pilton redevelopment plan, which was an ongoing project at that time. Although it is obvious that the decision to demolish scheme A was a radical solution to its persistent social problems, the Housing committee did not applied the same solution to scheme B, whose social problems were, in fact, worse than scheme A. To understand the reasons by which the decision to demolish scheme A was made, the following discussion examine the overall picture of the decision making and relevant factors which were involved in the redevelopment of the West Pilton and West Granton areas in the 1980s.

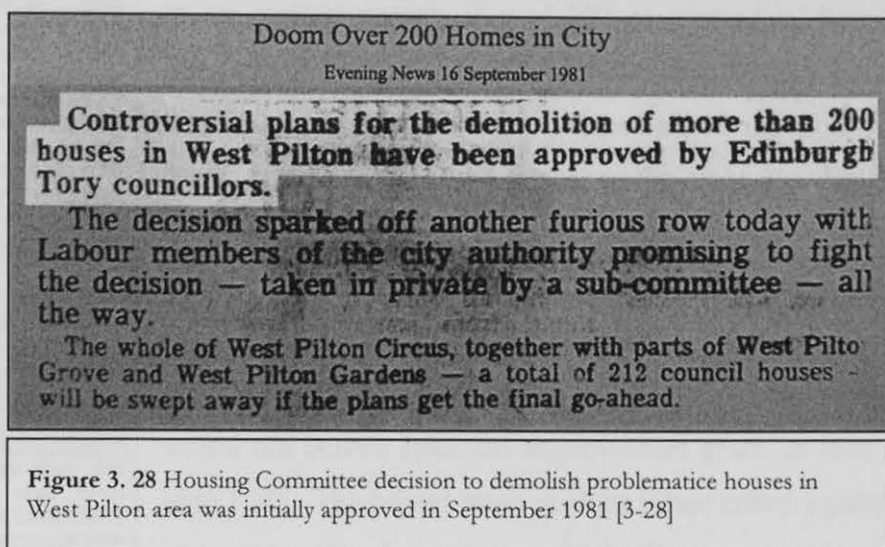
Standards	Eyesore
<p>He said that rehabilitation of the property had been looked at, but rejected.</p> <p>"It is just not on. These houses were built immediately after the war when standards were not high. Cost of rehabilitation would be absolutely prohibitive — anything between £12,000 and £14,000 a house.</p> <p>New building was not a solution either, said Councillor Waugh.</p>	<p>"People simply don't want to live at this particular location. There would be no demand."</p> <p>And he estimated that each new house would cost at least £30,000.</p> <p>"This is money we consider would be better spent in other directions. Every day that passes is costing ratepayers money. We cannot afford to allow these homes to remain, as they are, any longer. Most are empty but repairs caused by vandalism are costing us thousands of pounds. The whole place has become a costly eyesore."</p>
<p>Evening News 16 September 1981 Interviewing Councillor Cornelius Waugh</p>	

Figure 3. 27 Councillor Waugh opinions supporting the demolition plan [3-27]

During the 1980s, the Housing Committee was concerned particularly about the housing problem in the northern part of Edinburgh. Many housing estates were in substandard condition, for example West Pilton Circus, Muirhouse, and West Granton schemes A and B. The Housing Committee, under the chairmanship of Conservative local government put forward the radical solution of demolishing the problematic housing



and redeveloping the vacant land for new houses. The Housing Committee believed that new buildings would require less maintenance as well as would attract more residents to live in the area. In 1981, the Housing Committee announced a proposal for the demolition of 200 houses in West Pilton area. The initial stage of the proposal would involve the demolition of West Pilton Circus, West Pilton Grove and West Pilton Gardens. The Housing Committee was confident that the redevelopment would be the best solution for the housing in West Pilton area.



Residents of West Pilton established 'Pilton Action Group' to protest against the demolition proposal. The Group emphasised their desire to remain living in the area and pleaded with the Housing Committee to reconsider its decision. The Pilton Action Group also submitted a report on the feasibility of the rehabilitation of West Pilton. This was undertaken in consultation with Robert H. Soper and Company, chartered quantity surveyors, representing Link Ltd., a development firm. According to Mr. Galloway, chairman of the Pilton group, rehabilitation of West Pilton would be viable and the company would be interested in redeveloping the area. The Housing Committee agreed on the proposed rehabilitation project but emphasised that it would be necessary to involve the private sector due to the lack of initiative funding for such a large scale project. The Housing Committee's position was that the problematic housing required comprehensive redevelopment rather than partial repair work. However, comprehensive redevelopment would require large amount of funding which

was beyond Housing Committee's financial capability. The Housing Committee developed the proposal in consultation with the Pilton Action Group and developers, which were Barrett, Wimpey and Millers.<sup>1</sup> After the refurbishment, the housing was to be transferred to the ownership of Housing Association. The final proposal was approved in July 1983.

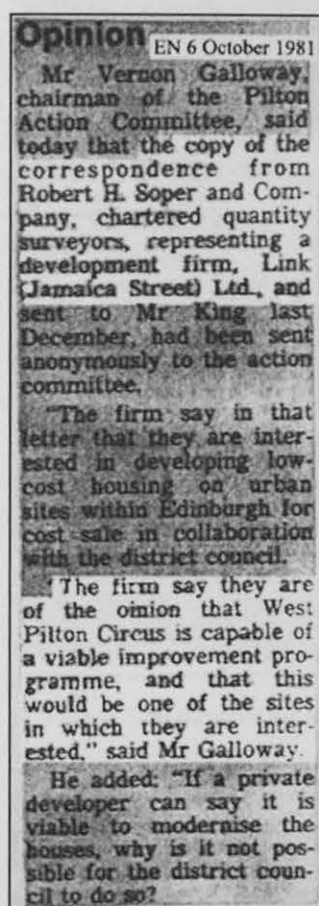


Figure 3. 29 the third party opinion on viability of redevelopment of West Pilton [3-29]

Redevelopment of West Pilton was a joint-venture between the private sector and the Housing Committee which was one of the earliest privatisation of 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing. The project was partly funded by Edinburgh District Council via an improvement grant.<sup>2</sup> According to the Scotsman, dated April 25<sup>th</sup> 1984, the improvement grant was designed to help individual owner occupiers who lived in the houses in need of repair. The reallocation of the improvement grants to private developers would directly affect a large number of residents, who had applied for the grant. These residents would not benefit from the improvement grant, at least not until 1985. The privatisation of West Pilton raised a political argument over the way in which Conservative Housing Committee was managing public money. The "Conservative" Housing Committee was criticised by Labour local politicians for using the improvement grant to support investment of public sectors and for the privatisation of social housing. According to Councillor Eleanor McLaughlin of the Labour opposition, the rule on improvement grants was bent to allow developers to make healthy profit. It was reported that Barratt Scotland received

£5,200 for each house for which they sold at £22,950.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Councillor Ralph Brereton, leader of the Conservative administration, argued that the best way to spend public money on housing problems was to concentrate on the comprehensive

<sup>1</sup> Scotsman (Edinburgh) 25 April 1984, reported by Simon Bain

<sup>2</sup> Scotsman (Edinburgh) 25 April, 1984 reported by Melanie Reid

<sup>3</sup> Scotsman (Edinburgh), 25 April 1984 reported by Simon Bain

redevelopment of each area in turn. Distributing the money to individuals would not have a long term impact. Figure 3.30 details a debate for and against the decision to allocate improvement grants to developer.

<p><b>Problem of the improvement grant</b></p>	<p><b>Reasons for the improvement grant</b></p>	<p><b>Reason Against the Improvement Grant</b></p>	<p><b>Simon Bain reported</b></p>
<p>In the biggest one-off privatisation of its kind yet to happen in Britain, the consortium will buy the houses for just under £3.8 million and receive £3.2 million in grant, spread over three years. It is intended that the money raised from the sale will pay for the rehabilitation of the remaining 900 council houses on the estate.</p> <p>What has infuriated the council's political opponents, housing groups and many members of the ordinary public is that the Pilton grant looks set to continue when it is estimated that over 10,000 owner-occupiers in Edinburgh who had their application in the pipeline for a 90 per cent grant will not now get it. Hit by the sudden freeze of the Government grant scheme in October, five months before it was officially due to end, these householders, along with thousands who were expected to apply before March, may have to wait until 1985 before they are fully processed. By some estimates the queue stretches until 1988.</p>	<p>But Councillor Ralph Brereton, leader of the Conservative administration, says that it would be a disaster if the West Pilton venture was stopped now. "If we stop we have £1 million to spend on owner-occupiers. That's true. But if we diverted that £1 million from Pilton to the rest of the town it would be a drop in the ocean. It wouldn't appease anyone. It may make a visible impact but it would be spread right across the town. Concentrated in Pilton, it will have a vast impact."</p> <p>"Those houses in Pilton are pretty worthless. This is a way of getting £3.2 million out of the Government. If we give it to the builders, who pay a purchase price to us, then we can spend the money doing up the remaining council houses. It's a way of diverting Government improvement grants into money to spend on council houses."</p> <p>"We say that in fact giving the money to the developers is the fastest way to get the maximum number of new</p>	<p>cheap houses on the market. For example, in three years in Pilton they will have put 700 on the market. It's the fastest way to get Government money into Edinburgh."</p> <p>"Right across the UK very big council estates haven't worked. It doesn't matter a damn whether they are run by Conservative, Labour or Liberal. We are trying to break up a big unsuccessful estate into small areas."</p> <p>But however worthy the Conservatives' bold plan to rescue Pilton is, the action opens up a political divide. Councillor Mrs Eleanor McLaughlin, the Labour housing spokeswoman, accuses the council of laundering money. "The developers are practically getting the houses for nothing. The £1 million shouldn't go to the developers but should be spent on individual repair grants to people who have already incurred legal expenses and architects' fees. We moved a motion to that effect and were laughed out of court."</p>	<p>The plan was fiercely attacked by Labour councillors last year, when the developers offered £3.79 million on condition that more than £3 million would be repaid in improvement grants. Recently Labour said the final gain to the council had been only £300,000, or £4000 a house, and the chairman of Barratt Scotland said their houses had qualified for £5,200 each in grant. The Barratt showhouse opened earlier this month priced at £22,950.</p> <p>Mr Drummond-Young, accusing Labour of having a moribund policy, said the prices charged were within reach of council tenants, who were queuing up for the houses, and most purchasers had an income of £7000 to £8000 a year.</p> <p>Councillor Eleanor McLaughlin, Labour's housing spokesperson, said the houses being modernised by the council were proving equally popular, and represented better value both to the ratepayer and the tenant. They were being improved to a higher standard in many cases, and it was a disgrace that the rules on improvement grants had been bent to allow developers to make a healthy profit.</p>

Collective Press Cutting from Scotsman 25 April 1984  
Left side reported by Melanie Reid and Right side reported by Simon Bain

Figure 3.30 Reasons for and against the improvement grant for West Pilton redevelopment [3-30]

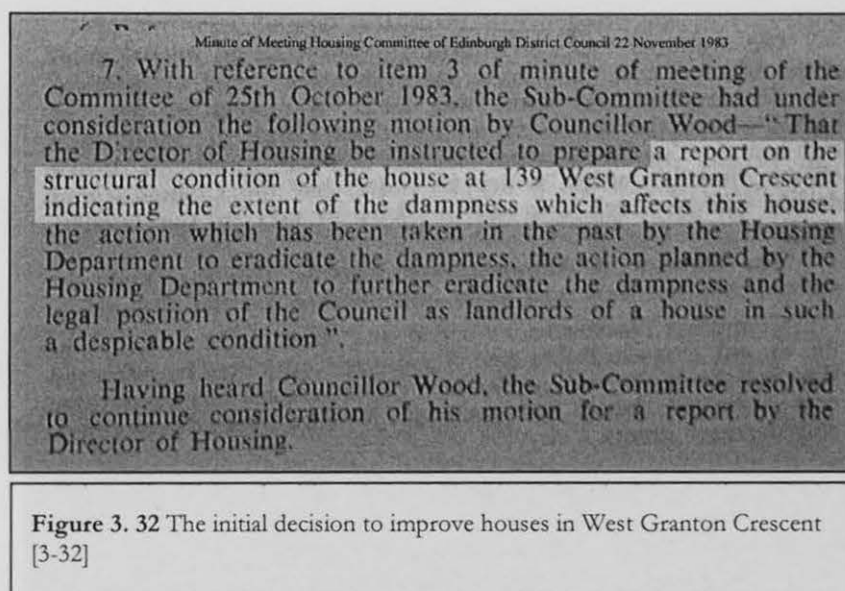
By 1987 many phases of the redevelopment in West Pilton had been completed. As seen in figure 3.31, the Evening News dated August 29<sup>th</sup> 1987, reported that residents were satisfied with their new houses. The redevelopment was hailed as an example of very successful cooperation between the private and public sectors in solving housing problems. The Housing Committee hoped to repeat the joint investment approach towards housing problems in Niddrie (See Chapter 4) and Craigmillar, as well as in other deprived council housing estates.<sup>1</sup> The success of West Pilton redevelopment led the Housing Committee to initiate a similar redevelopment programme for West Granton housing estate.

<sup>1</sup> Scotsman (Edinburgh), 25 April 1984 reported by Simon Bain

**Figure 3. 31** The initial decision to improve houses in West Granton Crescent [3-31]



The Housing Committee began considering the feasibility of an improvement programme for West Granton scheme A and B in 1983. The initial programme was intended to carry out remedial actions for problems relating to dampness in West Granton Crescent.<sup>1</sup> This housing area also required improvements to the children's play area<sup>2</sup> and security of the house for elderly<sup>3</sup>. As seen above, in scheme A, vandalism and petty crime were very serious, however, this improvement programme did not directly address the problems.



<sup>1</sup> The minute of the meeting of Housing Committee, 22 November 1983, West Granton

<sup>2</sup> The minute of the meeting of Housing Committee, 12 July 1983, West Granton

<sup>3</sup> The minute of the meeting of Housing Committee, 16 June 1983, West Granton



**16 West Granton View — alterations to accesses — applicants for tender documents —** The Sub-Committee, having considered report dated 15 February 1984 by the Director of Technical Services on applicants for tender documents for alterations to accesses at West Granton View, resolved to recommend that tender documents be issued to the following contractors:—

Rossedin Buildings Ltd, 2 Commercial Street, Edinburgh  
 Meldrum & Bruce Ltd, Edgefield Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead  
 James Turner & Company Ltd, Westfield Street, Edinburgh  
 Alexander Hall & Son (Builders) Ltd, Granitehill Road, Northfield, Aberdeen  
 Peter Walker & Son (Edinburgh) Ltd, 20-30 Upper Gray Street, Edinburgh  
 ERDC Construction Ltd, 10 Millar Place, Edinburgh

Housing Committee - General Purposes Sub-committee, 28 February 1984

**Figure 3. 33** the minute of the of meeting Housing Committee, General Purpose Sub-committee, held on February 28<sup>th</sup> 1984 [3-33]

Housing improvement programme addressed characteristics of buildings that may be causes of housing problems. In West Granton housing area, the Housing Department proposed a pilot project experimenting with the removal of high-level walkways. The Housing Committee resolved that the pilot project would be carried out at West Granton View in scheme B. The project had generated a satisfactory result. The Housing Committee therefore decided to undertake similar improvement programme for all buildings in West Granton housing schemes.

**West Granton - Priority Estate Initiative -** Reference was made to item 3 of minute of meeting of the Committee of 7 June 1988 resolving, *inter alia*, in regard to the feasibility study prepared by the Consultants, Wann, McLaren and Partners on proposals for the upgrading of the deck access housing within the Granton estate, (West Granton 'B' Scheme) that:-

- (a) the report be used as the basis for further and full consultation with the tenants; and,
- (b) it be noted that further discussions were continuing to determine the involvement of other public sector Housing Agencies and providers.

There were submitted (a) report dated 7 September 1988 by the Director of Housing intimating that tenant consultation for the West Granton 'B' Scheme was now complete and would be the subject of a further report to Committee and (b) report by the Consultants, Sir Frederick Snow and Partners on the West Granton 'A' Scheme: detailing a number of options for the improvement of the estate and indicating the financial implications of the proposals.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that tenant consultation in West Granton 'B' was complete and would be the subject of a further report;
- (ii) that the various options contained in the Consultant's report on West Granton 'A' Scheme and their financial implications be noted;
- (iii) that the report be used as the basis for further and full consultation with the tenants; and,
- (iv) to note that discussions with the appropriate funding agencies had been extended to include West Granton 'A' for consideration in any comprehensive package of measures.

**Figure 3. 34** shows Housing Committee's initial decision to improve West Granton scheme-B and A [3-34]

In 1988, the Housing Committee obtained feasibility studies of improvements for schemes A and B on which the decision making was based. Wann, McLaren and Partners submitted the report on Scheme B, the result of which indicated the viability of improvement. The improvement programme focused on the general refurbishment of houses and the alteration of the high level walkway. The programme was also a joint-venture redevelopment between the public and the private sectors.

A feasibility study of scheme A was carried out by Sir Frederick Snow and Partners. The study showed that buildings in scheme A had structural problem which included widespread cracking, spalling roughcast, inadequate floor support, water penetration, poor insulation and defective windows.

Immediately adjoining West Granton 'B' is the 'A' scheme (ie the westmost part). It consists of a similar number of houses (515), contained within 14 inter-linked and predominantly 5 storey deck-access blocks.

These dwellings also display signs of structural distress, and some of the physical defects include widespread cracking, spalling roughcast, inadequate floor support, water penetration, poor insulation and defective windows. In terms of voids and difficult-to-let houses, West Granton 'A' is not yet as bad as the 'B' scheme, but there can be little doubt that, unless the appropriate action is taken, the situation will rapidly approach the crisis level apparent in the neighbouring scheme.

A different firm of consultants, Sir Frederick Snow and Partners, were therefore commissioned to prepare proposals for the upgrading of the 'A' scheme houses.

The Consultant's feasibility study is contained in two reports, and two copies of these have been made available for study in the Member's Lounge.

The study concludes that to fully improve the dwellings in order to eliminate structural and physical defects, improve access, refuse disposal and the environment will cost in excess of £15m. A number of options are considered including partial and total demolition, new-building, and decapping ie reducing the height by 2 or 3 storeys. The consultants suggest that in terms of value of money, quality of accommodation created, and number of houses retained the best option for the Council is a combination of decapping and new-build. The consultants estimate that in this way 260 improved houses could be retained and 140 new houses created in the open areas at an approximate cost of £11m.

Figure 3. 35 Summary of the feasibility study of West Granton scheme-A [3-35]

The study concluded that the estimated cost of full improvement would exceed £15 million. This would cover eliminating structural and physical defects, improving access, refuse disposal system and the surrounding in general. The result would be 260



improved houses and 140 new houses built in the open area. The Housing Committee resolved that further consultation with funding agencies was required. It also considered the possibility of initiating a comprehensive redevelopment of scheme A that is total demolition and rebuild new houses.



**Figure 3. 36** shows that the West Granton scheme-A had structural problems; wide spread cracks were a sign of structural distress [3-36]

In 1989, Scottish Homes (previously the Housing Corporation) and Scottish Development Agency agreed in principle to support the redevelopment of West Granton housing area. As the project developed, it was extended to cover the north-western area of the city. A report by the Director of Housing, dated September 12<sup>th</sup> 1989 indicated that housing problems in the Muirhouse and Pilton wards including West Granton were the result of poverty and unemployment within the area. The problems would require 'expenditure probably exceeding £100 million'. The redevelopment had now focused on the problems related not only to buildings but also to socioeconomic structure of urban area.

Figure 3.36 shows details and conditions on which the agreement was made. Strategic plan for urban renewal was carried out. Figure 3.37 shows the aim of the strategy. By September 1989, North Edinburgh Area Renewal, a comprehensive redevelopment, was instigated.

**West Granton Tenants' Association - deputation** - Reference was made to item 2 of minute of meeting of the Housing Committee of 21 March 1989 instructing the Director of Housing to convene an early meeting with representatives of the West Granton Housing Co-operative and West Granton Tenants' Association to update them on progress of plans for setting up a housing development programme which would include the West Granton area and to report.

There was submitted report dated 6 April 1989 by the Director of Housing regarding the meeting at which the residents had been advised of progress on the matter.

The Scottish Development Agency and Scottish Homes had indicated support, in principle to the redevelopment of the West Granton area but were unable to make a specific commitment until the District Council had determined its strategy for renewal of the area. The Tenants' Association and the Housing Co-operative were to register with Scottish Homes with the purpose of applying for funding. This would require a commitment by the Council to agree, in principle, to the transfer of housing stock. West Granton Grove and Loan had been identified as possible sites for a new-build housing co-operative following demolition of the existing, largely vacant, properties. Scottish Homes had indicated that they were prepared to match Council funding to assist the Group in its efforts up to a maximum of £5,000.

The Sub-Committee resolved to recommend:-

- that approval in principle be given to the properties at West Granton Grove and Loan being declared surplus to Housing Committee requirements and made available for transfer to the Housing Co-operative Steering Group on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Economic Development and Estates Committee and subject also to a financial commitment from Scottish Homes;
- that approval in principle be given to a financial contribution to assist the Steering Group in the development of its proposals, the details of which would be the subject of a further report; and
- that a report outlining a strategy for the comprehensive upgrading of the north-west area of the City be presented to Committee in due course.

Figure 3. 37 Report on the initial stage of redevelopment of West Granton area [3-37]

Figure 3. 38 North Edinburgh Area Renewal aimed to uproot the socioeconomic problems of the area [3-38]

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH DISTRICT COUNCIL  
HOUSING COMMITTEE  
12 September 1989  
Report by the Director of Housing  
NORTH EDINBURGH AREA RENEWAL

ITEM No. 3(a)

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

The attached report has been produced as part of the Council's on-going strategy for the Priority Areas. It covers the North West of Edinburgh, particularly in relation to West Granton and Muirhouse. It outlines a housing strategy, but also recognises that a housing strategy alone cannot solve the area's problems. It therefore should be seen as part of a comprehensive strategy which would include economic, social, physical, recreational and commercial aspects.



#### Why a Strategy is Needed

The housing stock of Muirhouse and Pilton wards, including West Granton, requires expenditure probably exceeding £100 million to create acceptable conditions. The same area (at June, 1989) contained 1191 registered unemployed people and many others who would be glad of employment. This strategy sets out principles to justify and guide the enormous investment in physical and human resources required to tackle such problems. Progress will not be immediate in all areas, but by integrating the approaches of all the interested organisations a greater momentum of change can be achieved.

**Figure 3.39** Reasons given for the requirement of North Edinburgh Area Renewal Strategy [3.39]

**West Granton 'A' Scheme : Demolition of Flats and Ancillary Works - tenders -** With reference to item 3 of minute of meeting of the Committee of 15 June 1993 there was submitted joint report dated 26 September 1994 by the Executive Directors of Housing and Property Services on the tenders received for the demolition of a number of the flats forming part of the West Granton 'A' Scheme.

The Committee resolved -

11 October 1994 Housing Committee

- (a) to authorise acceptance of the lowest tender submitted being that by Scotdem Limited in the sum of £544,164.60 to which there required to be added £108,835.40 for fees and salaries giving a total project cost of £653,000; and

**Figure 3. 40** Housing committee resolved that demolition of scheme-A was accepted [3-40]

schemes A and B became a part of this strategy redevelopment, and were priority areas requiring immediate courses of action. As a result, the initial decision to refurbish West Granton scheme B was revoked and the housing was demolished to make land available for new houses in May 1992. The Housing Committee decided to demolish scheme A in October 1994 at the total cost of £653,000. The main reason was that refurbishment of scheme A would be economical unviable.

From resident's viewpoints, majority of them seemed to agree with the demolition of scheme A. Nonetheless, the Evening News reported that many of former tenants were emotionally attached to their previous home when they saw scheme A being demolished.<sup>1</sup> Margaret Ramsay, chairperson of West Pilton Housing Co-operative and was a former tenant of scheme A, said *"I'm glad to see them go and I know it's all for*

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 24 January 1995

*the best, but it is sad because I did live in that house for five years.*" Despite reportedly appalling conditions of scheme A, it seems that residents, somehow, manage to establish a sense of home and community. In other case studies of this study, impact of the sense of community appears to be an influential factor in the decision making. Scheme A was demolished in 1995. In 2000, the site of West Granton scheme A had not yet been redeveloped.

**Figure 3. 41** previous residents were emotionally attached to the housing despite some bad experiences [3-41]



### 3.4. Reasons involved in decision-making process

#### 3.4.1. *Structural integrity*

West Granton scheme A had shown serious signs of structural distress which caused by considerable movement of the structure components. The movement resulted in widespread cracks, spalling roughcast and water penetration. It was reported that the timber floor support was structurally inadequate. These structural problems would require comprehensive refurbishment. In general, structural integrity of scheme A was substandard.

#### 3.4.2. *Defective design features and Adaptability*

Scheme A required the alteration of high-level walkway which in the past had caused problems related to antisocial behaviour, costly maintenance and noise pollution. As seen, the high level walkways were and integral part of the building's structure. It was

not possible to remove the walkway without large scale alteration of the building's structure. This leads to the third criterion that is cost of refurbishment.

### ***3.4.3. Cost of redevelopment***

The estimated cost of the West Granton rehabilitation project was £15 million. This amount of money was beyond the financial capacity of the Housing Committee. In terms of cost-effectiveness, there would have been only 260 improved houses and 140 new houses in the area. As seen in figure 4.24, the Housing Committee spent around £4 million on improvement grants for the West Pilton redevelopment covering around 700 houses. The Housing Committee found that there was no private developer showing an interest to refurbish scheme A. Therefore it would appear that the Housing Committee considered the decision to demolish scheme A and redevelop the vacant land as the most reasonable solution.

## **3.5. Summary and Conclusions**

The decision on the demolition of West Pilton scheme A was one stage of decision-making process for the improvement of the West Granton housing estate. Initially, the decisions on the future of West Granton Schemes A and B included various options which aimed to improve the quality of the schemes. The improvement began in 1983 when the Housing Committee carried out a pilot project for alteration to the high-level walkways of West Granton scheme B. At that time, the Housing Committee was considering general improvement to scheme A which included security for elderly flats, improving children's play areas and prevention of condensation and dampness. In the early 1980s, West Granton schemes A and B had become undesirable housing and being prepared for redevelopment. As the decision making proceeded, new information was presented to the Housing Committee and resulting in changes in nature of the problem.

In 1987, the success of the West Pilton joint-redevelopment project had given rise to the comprehensive redevelopment of deprived housing areas where housing problems had been in an intolerable state. The comprehensive redevelopment often included the

demolition of 'uninhabitable houses' and rebuilding new houses. In the past, this type of redevelopment was beyond the financial capacity of the Housing Committee. In collaboration with private and other public sector institutions, such comprehensive redevelopments became feasible. Notwithstanding, an incentive for private developers to invest in these problematic social housing estates was probably public open space such as that of West Pilton Circus. Private developers were allowed to build new houses on such area which seem to have been a free gift to them.

The limit of financial capacity was one reason that led the Housing committee to employ 'joint-redevelopment' approach towards housing problems in West Granton housing area. This approach is a driving force that turned housing redevelopment for West Pilton and West Granton areas into 'North Edinburgh Area Renewal' project, one of the largest urban regenerations in Scotland aiming to solve both socioeconomic and housing problems. Around the mid 1990s, the Housing Committee had encountered a situation in which it could not find joint-developers for redevelopment of scheme A. The decision on the future of the redundant scheme A had to be considered in regard to the aims of North Edinburgh Area Renewal. It would appear that the site of scheme A was incompatible with the master plan of the regeneration project.

To conclude, the decisive criterion by which the initial decision to demolish West Granton scheme A was made was low adaptability of its structure. Architectural design of West Granton housing schemes, which is high-level walkways, contributed to social problems. The case study has also shown that if such design characters cannot be altered, it is likely that the buildings will be demolished, particularly in case of mass social housing. Considering the decision on the future of redundant 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, the case study also shows that contemporary buildings are expected to meet basic demands of residents and society. The basic demand is that the housing should have structural stability and perform well as a dwelling. In terms of the socioeconomic problems of an urban area, if the buildings can not contribute to socioeconomic development or having tendency to obstruct the development, such buildings are likely to be demolished.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **The Demolition of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This is a case study examining the decision on the rehabilitation of Niddrie Marischal Policies, a housing estate in Edinburgh, better known as Niddrie House. Niddrie House was a mixed development of the late 1960s. It had an interesting layout which emphasised on a high proportion of open space and communal courtyards. The housing composed of 5storey tenements and twin tower blocks, Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses. During the 1970s- 1980s, persistent vandalism and antisocial behaviour caused the rapid decline of this housing estate. Vandals caused damage to the buildings and psychological distress to the residents, particularly to those who lived in the tower blocks. Many residents were compelled by this intolerable problem to leave the estate. The rest decided to pressure Edinburgh District Council to solve the problems. The Housing Committee of Edinburgh District Council launched Niddrie Houses Improvement Project in 1989. This included the refurbishment of the tenements. Phase 3 of the project was the demolition of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses, which took place in 1991 in order to building new low-rise houses. It was believed that the demolition would eradicate the incidence of crime and vandalism within the estate. When the project was completed, social problems were lowered considerably and in this respect, it was successful. This case study aims to identify the reasons for the decision to demolish the twin tower blocks and for the decision to refurbish tenements.

## 4.2. Background of Niddrie Marischal Policies

### 4.2.1. *Niddrie Marischal Policies*

In 1966, Edinburgh District Council proposed a development plan for a public amenity open space located near Niddrie Marischal to create residential and recreational areas. The development plan allocated 72.27 acres for open space and 27.27 acres for housing,<sup>1</sup> which was named Niddrie Marischal Policies. This housing estate was surrounded by other housing estates, existing recreation areas and farmland. The estate was situated on the northeast of the Craigmillar area, and on the south side of Niddrie Mains Road, adjacent to Jack Kane Park on the east. The basic layout of Niddrie House was prepared by Messrs Morris and Steedman Architects.<sup>2</sup> The development was undertaken under a negotiated contract with Messrs Hart Brothers (Builders) Ltd. The construction began at the end of 1969 and took two and a half years to complete



**Figure 4. 1** An aerial view of Niddrie Marischal Policies viz. Niddrie House and its neighbouring areas, 1991 [4-1]

<sup>1</sup> The minute of the meeting of the Education, Civic Amenities, Housing and Planning Committee (Edinburgh City Archive), 14 January 1966.

<sup>2</sup> The minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee (Edinburgh City Archive), 13 December 1966. Note: in this minute of the meeting, the architectural firm was addressed as Messrs Mattis & Steedman.



The estate consisted mainly of 5 storey tenements with two tower blocks as a landmark. Greendykes primary school was on the west side. Jack Kane Centre, a community centre, provided indoor recreational facilities such as fitness, party rooms and game rooms. Nearby, Hunter Hall Public Park consisted of one rugby pitch and eleven football fields. There were only two shops designated in the initial housing layout. There were three separated main roads accessing the estate. 'Niddrie House Drive' entered from the north, 'Niddrie House Avenue' linked to Greendykes estate on the west and 'Niddrie House Park' linked to Niddrie Marischal Place on the northwest. Niddrie House Park Road gave access to Niddrie House Park and Niddrie House Square but did not link through the rest of the estate. The roads had footpaths and speed reduction features such as bumpers and different road patterns. The area of Niddrie House Garden, -Grove, -Square and -Park had cul-de-sac roads accessing their car parking space. The design was intended to reduce the number of cars passing through the areas and endangering children. Between the rear side of Niddrie House Grove and Niddrie House Square, residents could walk through to a bus stop. The area was adjacent to the tower blocks, and comprised a small park and pedestrian routes.

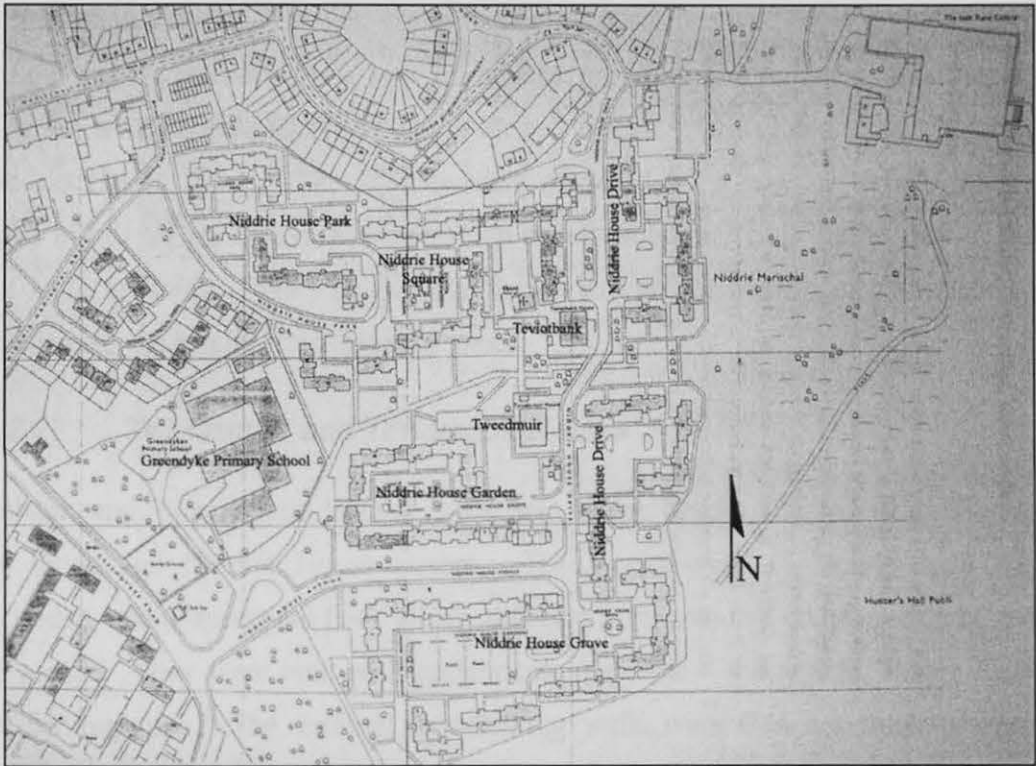


Figure 4. 2 Layout of Niddrie House showing sub-divided courtyards [4-2]

The programme of Niddrie House was intended to recreate the balance of a natural growth community. Niddrie House was planned to accommodate the mixed age group of the residents, this was reflected in four types of 600 dwelling units. They were divided into 152 units of 2-apartment flat for elderly or single people, 310 units of 3-apartment flat for couples, 124 units of 4-apartment flat for small families and 14 units of 5-apartment flats for large families with children. The density of the estate was of 3.25 persons per acre. Open space was mainly used for car parking which was accounted 6.5 acre or 25 % of total site area. There were a total of 519 parking spaces with 40 lock-up garages.<sup>1</sup>

A noticeable feature of Niddrie House's layout was subdivided courtyards. The courtyards were in an irregular shape and acted as a communal space for each subdivided group of residents. The design was intended to provide a better chance for the residents to make acquaintances within their group and, at the same time, to achieve a sense of identity within each courtyard. Each courtyard could be accessed through gaps between buildings, which also provided pedestrian access to main roads and small parks situated in the area. The courtyards had concrete surface with some grassed areas. Each one was surrounded by a row of houses providing surveillance of strangers entering the area. Niddrie House Drive comprised 2 open squares lined along the street of Niddrie House Drive. The squares were enclosed by a row of terrace houses arranged in a U-shape. There was pedestrian access to Hunter Hall Public Park at the rear of Niddrie House Drive. This unique layout was an outstanding characteristic of Niddrie House, especially from an aerial view.

#### **4.2.2. *Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses***

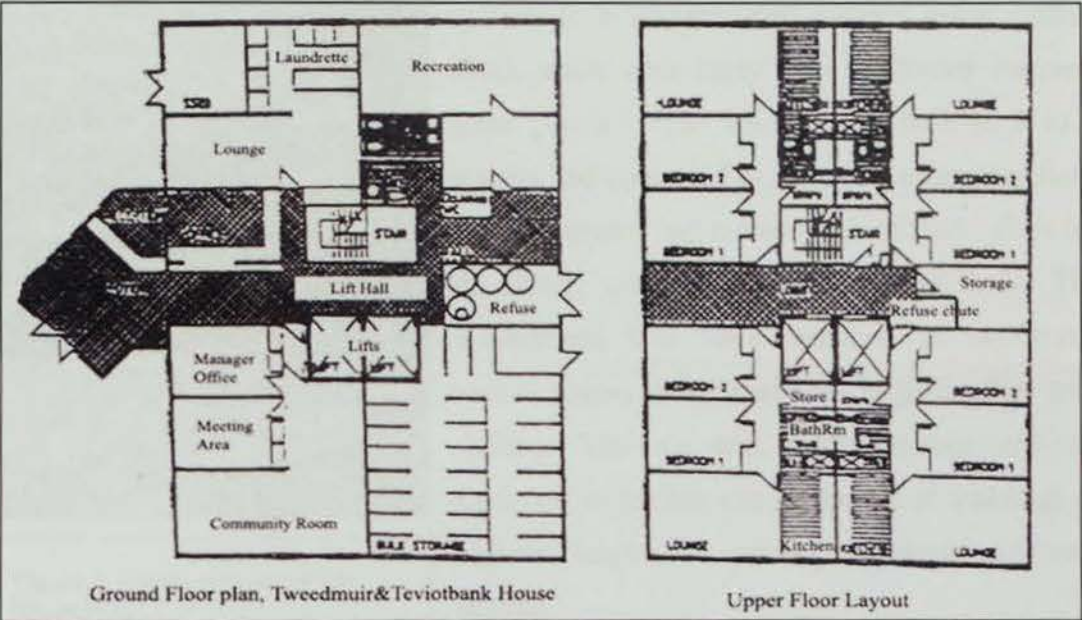
Teviotbank and Tweedsmuir Houses were twin tower blocks situated near Niddrie House Drive and Niddrie House Square. The blocks were 15 storeys high and comprised 2- and 3-apartment flats, which aimed to accommodate couples, elderly and single person. They were built with prefabrication system – the typical 'Bison Wall' Frame for high-rise. The external load-bearing walls were 6-inches thick pre-cast

---

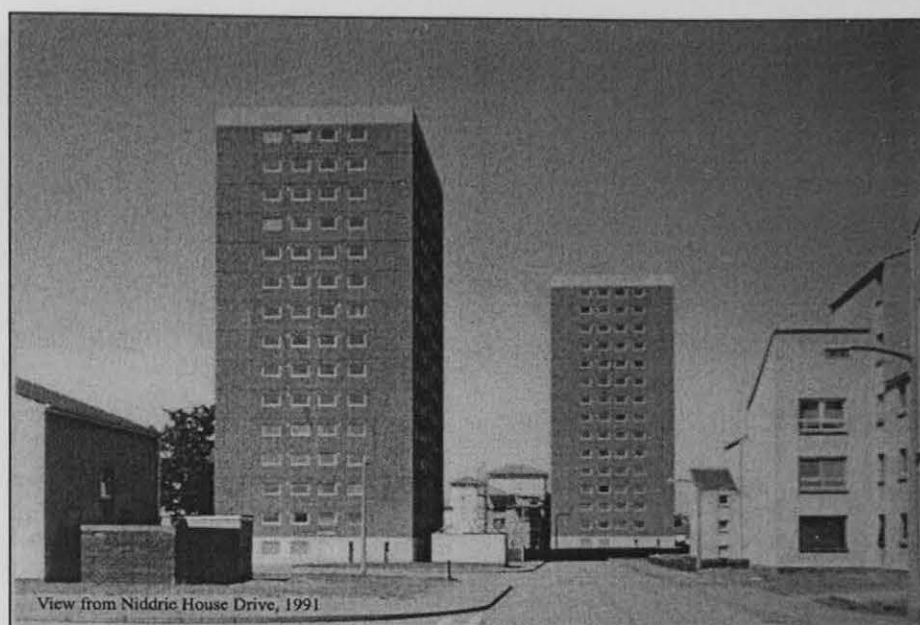
<sup>1</sup> City Architect, Edinburgh, (Architectural drawing of layout of Niddrie House), 1969, Edinburgh City Archive.



concrete with polystyrene as insulation and clad with 3-inches facing concrete. The internal structure was of precast-concrete floors and walls without columns and beams. The ground floor plan comprised a community room, a meeting area, a lounge and laundry, lifts and service rooms. A typical floor plan had 4 units of flats with the lift shaft and service duct at the centre of the building. All ducts, lift shafts and staircase were pre-cast concrete.



**Figure 4.4** Ground floor and upper floor layout of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank House [4-4]



**Figure 4. 5** Tweedmuir (front) and Teviotbank (far back) Houses, viewed from Niddrie House Drive Road looking north. On the front left is the sub power station [4-5]

#### 4.2.3. *Tenements in Niddrie House*

The tenements of Niddrie House were built with the Orlit construction system. This



**Figure 4. 6** aerial view of Niddrie House [4-6]

system is a prefabricated system using hollow block walls with fairly thin reinforced concrete outer panels.<sup>1</sup> The houses were built in 2 to 5 storeys and contained 2-, 3- and 4-apartment flats. Each courtyard had mixed types of flats. Flats for the elderly were usually on the ground floor. The 5-apartment flats were designed as two-storey terrace houses to accommodate large families with children. The tenements were in geometrical form. Each row of houses was composed of buildings of various heights to create interesting rhythmic skyline.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/schoolspropertyinfo/propertydata/schools/halstow/condition%20surveys/HALSTOW%20CS.doc>, accessed June, 2004

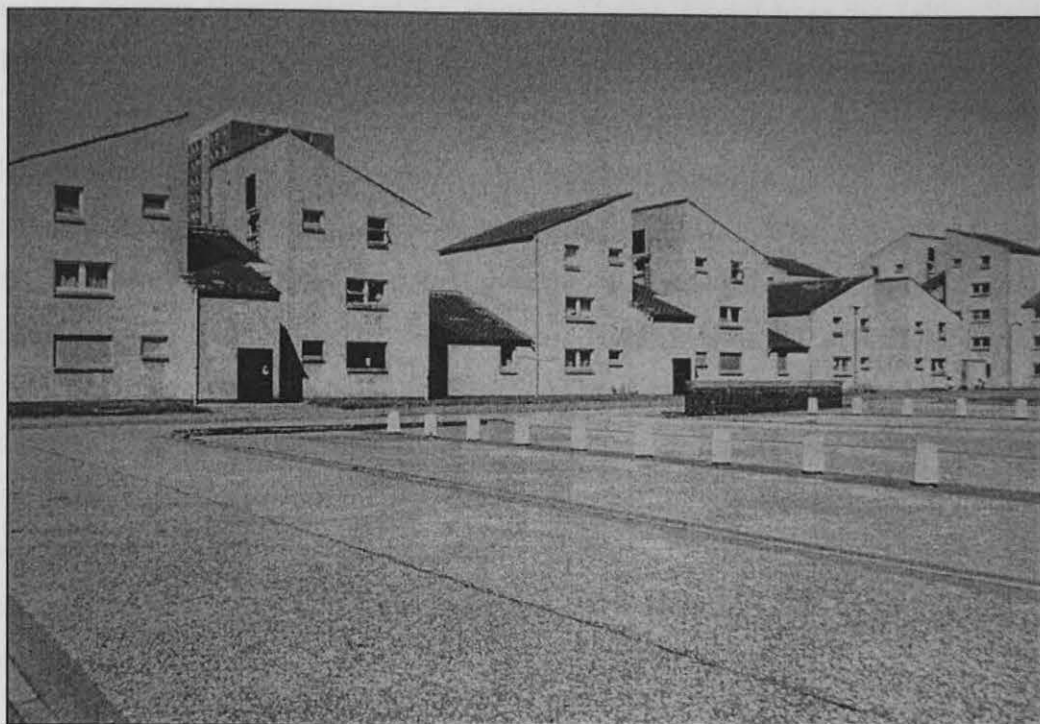


Figure 4. 7 shows 2- and 3- storey houses in Niddrie House Garden in 1989 [4-7]



Figure 4. 8 shows 5-storey houses in Niddrie House Grove in 1989 [4-8]

In 1972, Niddrie House received the Housing Design Award from the Saltire Society. The society was an independent group of people whose interest was in Scottish tradition, culture and art. The Housing Design award was established in 1937 to identify and encourage high quality housing development. The Saltire Society commented: "*despite its size, it has succeeded in achieving a sense of identity in each of the irregular 'courts' and lives up to some of the better traditions of Edinburgh housing*".<sup>1</sup> Despite its modern appearance, Niddrie House still carried with it a traditional form of the Scottish tenement. The tenement is an economical form of housing. This form of urban housing had long been in use for residential buildings in Scotland. The Housing Corporation for Edinburgh also built this form of housing when faced with a housing shortage or economic recession.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, Niddrie House reflected the integration of the Scottish urban tradition and modern social housing in its design.

Niddrie House, as a new housing estate, appealed to a number of prospective residents, but its location appeared to be a drawback to living in the area. The housing was situated within the Craigmillar housing area which had a bad reputation. In the beginning the name of the housing and its neighbouring area affected the letting of Niddrie House. Although the estate was highly praised, in contrast with the older parts of Craigmillar area, some prospective residents were reluctant to move into the area. Many of the residents did not like the modern geometrical form of the houses. Nonetheless, the newness of Niddrie House seemed to give a new hope for the people who had been having housing problems. After visiting the estate, many of them were satisfied and decided to move in to the estate. Mr Robert Frail, chairman of Niddrie Marischal Policies' Tenants Association in 1972, expressed his opinion: "*The award is well justified. I've stayed there for just over a year, and personally I know I wouldn't move anywhere else. It's just tremendous*."<sup>3</sup> The city council and present residents believed that the awarded project would encourage Craigmillar to develop into a more pleasant area as well as attract more good residents.

---

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 1 November 1972

<sup>2</sup> Worsdall, 1989, 11-12

<sup>3</sup> Evening News, 1 November 1972



#### 4.2.4. *Decline of Niddrie House*

A few years after of completion, Niddrie House experienced various problems which eventually led the estate into decline. The problems were related to technical defects in building services, inadequate insulation causing high energy consumption and poor ventilation causing condensation and dampness in the tenements. The area had insufficient facilities such as shops and laundries. In October 1982, a technical failure in a high-voltage cable caused power disruption in Teviotbank and Tweedsmuir Houses. The Evening News dated October 13<sup>th</sup> 1982, reported that the failure occurred on one Saturday when electricity failed for 4 hours. On the next Sunday, residents claimed that the blackout continued and lasted for 5 hours and continued for a short period on the next Monday. The tower blocks depended greatly on electricity to operate lifts, corridor lighting, ventilation, and water supply.<sup>1</sup> As a result, electric water pumps in the tower blocks and lifts were not operating. The windowless staircase was dark and very

difficult to use. During the incident, some residents had to use lighted newspapers and candles to find their way up. Mrs. Carol Page, of 13/2 Teviotbank House, who had just returned from hospital with her six-days-old daughter, had to walk up stairs to her 13<sup>th</sup> floor flat. Repair took several days. The power disruption seemed to disturb residents of the tower blocks considerably. The residents of the two tower blocks made a complaint about the incident. The incident forced the City Council to consider immediate action for the installation of an emergency



**Figure 4. 9** Electrical failure was one of the tower blocks technical problems. [4-9]

<sup>1</sup> Scotsman (Edinburgh), 13 October 1982

generator in all the City Council's high-rise flats. Residents had to endure a series of problems. Thieves stole plumbing fixtures, which damaged water pipe and caused flooding. Flats' doors were often vandalised. Vandals set fire on screens in drying area and abandoned furniture in the area around the estate.

Vandalism and petty crimes were the most severe and persistent problem in Niddrie House. The problem was concentrated in Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses and their adjacent areas. The Housing Committee had been aware of this problem since the late 1970s. In 1978, seven years after the estate was completed. Residents submitted a petition to complain about various problems caused by vandals and teenagers with antisocial behaviour.

8. There was submitted report dated 16th June 1978 by the Director of Housing intimating that the following petition had been handed in to the Housing Department containing 75 signatures—

“ The following petition is from residents in Tweedsmuir House and Teviotbank House and calls on Edinburgh District Council to fit locks to the doors leading to waste disposal chutes in the multis.

Tenants in the two multis are concerned that the chute closets are being used as toilets and in some cases youngsters are hiding in them so they can jump out and frighten anyone going in with rubbish”.

The Sub-Committee having heard the Director of Housing resolved to recommend as follows:—

- (a) that the necessary remedial work to secure chute rooms be carried out under normal maintenance;

**Figure 4. 10** Vandalism and anti-social behaviour reach a serious level by 1978 [4-10]

Some of the few remaining tenants in Tweedsmuir House, the Niddrie tower block, told today of the terror they face from vandals, glue sniffers and drug addicts.

And 27-year-old Lesley Thomas who has a son Scott (8), said: "All the houses above and beneath me are empty. This is a terrible place to live."

She said: "I have had five break-ins. On one occasion I stepped out of the lift to find three lads tearing at my door with chisels. I chased them off then had to break into the flat myself because they had damaged the lock so much."

Lesley says the thieves have stolen £3000 worth of goods from her home — televisions, hi-fi, vacuum cleaner and iron which she now has difficulty insuring. As well as the threat from outside the home, the walls in all the rooms are damp.

The move to force Edinburgh District Council to act sprang from the mothers' and toddlers' group, who meet in a ground floor room in Tweedsmuir.

Patricia Urquhart (38) mother of three, who was one of the first tenants in the block when it was built 14 years ago, formed the Tweedsmuir Tenants' Group.

She said: "Things started getting worse last summer. This did not used to be a bad place to live."

"Then it came to a crisis four weeks ago and we decided to form the tenants' group."

By MARGARET HARKER

"Vandals ripped out the tiles in the front entrance. They set fire to a blanket in the lift. The fire screens in the drying areas were being ripped out."

"They threw pieces of rubbish down. Little children were being hurt by debris thrown from the top floors. I decided that something had to be done about it."

Since their first approach to the council four weeks ago, the situation was improving.

Evening News 11 JUNE 1985



WALTER HUTCHISON  
Not surprised

Relief caretaker at Tweedsmuir, 34-year-old Walter Hutchison said he is not surprised that the block is now rated the worst in the city.

"I was living here as caretaker full time for three years, but the strain was so bad I had to get out."

He is a NUPE shop steward and the caretakers' union are trying to persuade the council to delegate more responsibility to caretakers, and provide round-the-clock cover so that someone is always there during the vandal "danger times" around 11 pm.

Caroline Donaghy (20) mother of two, said that vandalism had been getting worse in recent months.

## The tower of tears



Mrs Urquhart shows where the intercom panel was ripped out.

Figure 4. 11 Evening News reported on vandalism problems in Tweedsmuir & Teviot bank Houses [4-11]

In 1985, vandals set off at least 10 fires in the buildings, which cost the City Council £17,000 in damage repairs. The vandals were able to gain access to the buildings without surveillance and caused damage to residents' property. In 1984, new lifts costing £60,000 had to be installed for the two tower blocks, only twelve years after they were built. Margaret Harker of the Evening News reported that within one year, maintenance and repair of the new lifts had cost £13,000 because of vandalism.<sup>1</sup> An entry phone system was used to control entrance to the buildings but it was soon out of order because the intercom panel, at the main entrance, was stolen. Remedial actions had been taken to solve the problems but the results were only sustained over a short period before the problem reoccurred. Such incidents brought the name 'Niddrie' into disrepute and this affected residents' everyday life. According to an article in the

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 11 June 1985



Evening News, dated June 11<sup>th</sup> 1985, Mrs Leslie Thomas, one of the first residents of Tweedsmuir House, experienced difficulty in getting insurance for her property because she lived in a high-risk area. In June 1985, Mrs. Patricia Urquhart and other residents established a resident association called Niddrie House Rehabilitation and Planning Group (NHRPG). The group determined to improve their living standard and requested the refurbishment of the tower blocks. The group invited the Housing Committee to visit the housing estate in June 1985.



Figure 4. 12 Evening News reported vandalism problems in Tweedsmuir & Teviotbank Houses in June 1985 [4-12]

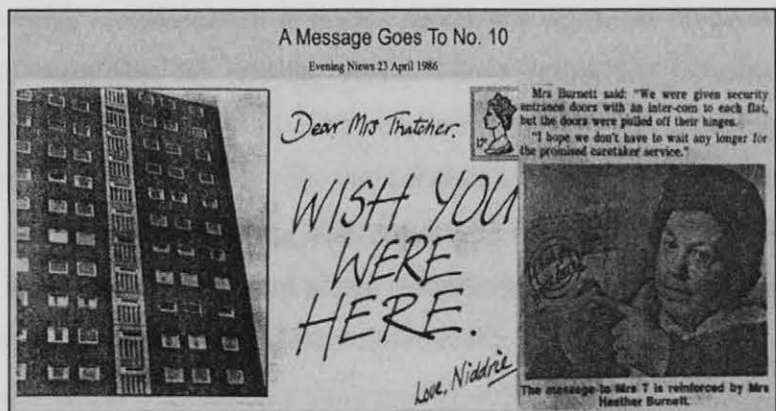
After the visit, The Housing Committee decided to take an immediate action in order to prevent the further decline of Niddrie House. It proposed a £59,000 repair programmes for the next financial year. Councillor Daphne Sleight, chairperson of the Housing Committee, said: "We are horrified to hear of the kind of damage that has taken place. This was a multi-storey block that was not considered to be top priority nor difficult to

manage.”<sup>1</sup> Councillor Sleigh made a promise to the resident group that the programme would start as soon as funding was available. The next section will focus on in detail decision-making process regarding the rehabilitation project of Niddrie House, including the decision to demolish Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank House and the refurbishment of the tenements.

#### 4.3. The Rehabilitation of Niddrie Houses

A visit of the Housing Committee to Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses initiated the rehabilitation of Niddrie House. After the visit, the Housing Committee had designated the housing estate as a top priority for remedial actions. However, the actual project did not begin until 1989. Robert Thompson of the Evening News reported in 1988 that almost 80% of flats in the tower blocks were unoccupied. Local Councillor David Brown commented that no-one wanted to live in Niddrie House because of vandalism and social problems.<sup>2</sup> During that time, the Housing Committee arranged security guards at the cost of £768 per week to patrol the area between 16.30 and 08.00 because caretakers were unable to provide adequate surveillance for the tower blocks. The temporary security measures improved the situation slightly while the Housing Committee considered long-term solutions. The delay caused frustration to the residents and allowed the estate to go further into decline.

**Figure 4. 13** shows a postcard sent to the Prime Minister protesting about the delay in action to tackle housing problems in Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses [4-13]



<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 11 June 1985, reported by Margaret Harker.

<sup>2</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 11 January 1988

In 1986, Mrs Heather Burnett, a tenant of Teviotbank Houses, demonstrated her anguish by sending a sarcastic postcard to Mrs Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister. Sandy Braid reported on the content of the postcard as;

"It's an invitation to the Prime Minister to spend a holiday in Niddrie...Free board and lodging for a fortnight...*The special features of Tweedsmuir House, Edinburgh's Tower of Fears, and neighbouring Teviotbank House are listed as follows*; Indoor swimming pool—**burst pipe, damp walls**; Easy access to your accommodation—**no door entry system**, infrequent care taking; Lively nightlife—**regular break-in**; Lifts—when working. Take your pick from our apartments—half of them are unoccupied. A holiday of a life time? 'Wish You Were Here'. (Evening News (Edinburgh), 23 April 1986)

Such publications brought Niddrie House into deeper disrepute. In 1988, the Housing Committee resolved that Niddrie House was to undergo a comprehensive rehabilitation. As seen in chapter 3 on West Granton, by the end of the 1980s building refurbishment was considered an ineffectual solution for housing estates with severe social problems. The Housing Committee granted a total budget of £5 million for multi-phase improvements to Niddrie House. The rehabilitation scheme was said to be one of the largest projects in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> The plan for comprehensive rehabilitation was prepared by Percy Johnson-Marshall and Partners in consultation with the resident group 'NHPRG'.

The Housing Corporation consulted with the Housing Committee regarding a proposal to create a community-based housing association for Niddrie House. This was a grassroots-approach that would, it was hoped, eradicate social problems. It involved residents in managing and sustaining the housing estate. As a result, the Housing Corporation registered NHRPG as Hunter Hall Housing Co-operative. The Housing Co-operative was to take an important role in the rehabilitation as well as the management of Niddrie House in the future. The objectives of the Housing Co-operative were to have an influence on the design where rehabilitation and development were taking place. In addition, there were 4 long-term objectives:

- Control over an organisation working on a more manageable scale
- Control of rent levels and lettings

---

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 11 January 1988

- Control over selection and management of staff and direct input into the management of the estate
- Maintaining a direct voice in development policy and practice in the estate

**By ROBERT THOMSON**  
Evening News 11 January 1988

**A £5,000,000-plus cash boost, for a project to transform one of Edinburgh's bleakest housing schemes, was revealed today.**

The money, from the Government-funded Housing Corporation, follows an approach from Edinburgh District Council. It will be released over the next two years to finance a plan which could make the Niddrie House area a model for the whole of Scotland to follow, according to East Edinburgh MP Gavin Strang.

District councillors will hear tomorrow of the Scottish Development Department's decision to allocate the Housing Corporation more than £9,000,000 this year for four schemes including Niddrie House.

**Half empty**

But Mr Strang told the "News": "The figure the Corporation are envisaging for Niddrie House is in excess of £5,000,000 over two years. It could be £2,000,000 in the first year.

"They have taken the decision in principle to invest what is required to achieve a comprehensive transformation of this area." The funds come on top of £1,500,000 to be spent on the area by Edinburgh District Council.

And housing co-operatives or associations will be a key part of the running of the "new" estate.

The council already have given £40,000 to a local group preparing to set up a housing co-operative association in Niddrie House, and who have been closely involved in the design of the scheme. Admin. and support also has come from the Craigmiles Festival Society.

The estate, which won awards when it was built 20 years ago, has become a nightmare for the dwindling number of tenants. Overall, almost half the 817 houses lie empty and in the area's two multi-storey blocks that figure jumps to around 80 per cent.

Local Councillor David Brown said: "I represented the area when it was built, and not long afterwards took the first deputations along to the housing committee complaining about the heating. I have seen the scheme deteriorate to the stage where it is now half empty and no-one wants to come and live here."

The development plan will see the houses transformed inside and out. The drab grey colour scheme will disappear as will the vast concrete areas originally designed to provide car parking.

Mr Glen Craig, of Percy Johnson-Marshall and Partners, the architects working with the local people, said: "We have done two or three similar types of scheme in different parts of Scotland, but this is the biggest challenge and the biggest scheme we have tackled in terms of the number of houses."

Mr Eric McGovern, chairman of the group of residents working on the scheme, said: "We want people to be proud to live in Niddrie House."

Councillor Garry Coutts said that the council realised that spending £1,500,000 would be insufficient for their plans, and had sought money elsewhere.

**Figure 4. 14** The Evening News reported on the comprehensive improvement project for Niddrie House in 1988 [4-14]

The rehabilitation was undertaken with Grant for Rent and Ownership (GRO).<sup>1</sup> It was the first time that GRO was introduced into housing development in Scotland. The rehabilitation of Niddrie House included the modernisation of interior spaces such as living rooms, kitchens and bathrooms. The external appearance of the tenements was to be transformed from a geometrical form into a more traditional type of dwelling.

<sup>1</sup> GRO grant or Grant for Rent and Ownership was introduced in 1989 and was designed to bring more housing choice for local people, particularly in urban housing estates. The grant has mainly concentrated on home ownership projects, where Scottish Homes would award grant funding of around 25 % of total cost to private developers to build affordable homes for sale in area where they would otherwise not operate.



**Figure 4. 15** The Scotsman dated 14 November 1989, reported on the progress of the rehabilitation of Niddrie House [4-15]



Hall Housing Co-operative officebearers (left to right) Janet Simpson, Frank Gilroy, Judy Ford and Macaulay show models of the old look (left) and the new. Below: Work in progress at Niddrie

A DESIRE to control their own housing environment was the spur to the formation of Hunters Hall Housing Co-operative on part of the sprawling Niddrie housing estate in Edinburgh.

No one pretends that this area of the city has not had more than its fair share of problems, with high unemployment, petty crime and vandalism, but forming the housing co-op is a positive move by a group of tenants to rise above them and improve their quality of life.

"We can identify the problems and are finding ways to deal with them," says Andrea McKirdy, the chairwoman of the committee which runs the co-op.

She talks of a definite new spirit afoot in the area since the housing co-op was set up last year to tackle the poor state of district council housing, which had been allowed to run down, mainly through lack of money for essential maintenance.

One way of overcoming this was to form a co-ownership housing co-operative and apply for funding from the then Housing Corporation, now Scottish Homes, buy the

houses in question from Edinburgh District Council and refurbish them to the co-op's own specifications.

This is exactly what has happened.

A group of tenants got together, registered as a housing co-operative last year, bought the 210 properties from the district council and set about their own refurbishment programme with a £5.6 million grant from Scottish Homes.

#### How a group of tenants on an Edinburgh estate have formed a co-operative to control their own housing environment

The co-op also obtained an additional £1.77 million from the Scottish Development Agency for external environmental improvements.

The main contractor for the project was Hart, the builder, of Trarant.

Now more than 80 people from Niddrie House district are members of Hunters Hall Housing Co-operative, with quite a few more on the waiting list to join.

"Everybody is enthusiastic about the project," says An-

drea McKirdy. "We have loads of ideas about how we would like things to be."

Now that they have control over their own housing it becomes feasible to put these ideas into practice. All tenants of the houses are co-op members and all members must be tenants.

The advantages of this for them include having direct input into how these houses are managed and maintained; a direct voice in the develop-

as direct repair services, including a selection of contractors to carry them out.

"After all, we are the ones who are living here, and are going to live in these refurbished houses, so we should know best what's needed," points out Andrea McKirdy.

Tenants were consulted by the architects Percy Johnson-Marshall & Partners on every aspect of refurbishment, such as internal decoration and fittings, before work started, even to switching kitchens from one side of a house to the other to let in more light.

A start was made on refurbishment work at the beginning of September this year when builders began an extensive renovation programme on the first phase of 210 low-rise flats and houses in the Niddrie House Drive, Niddrie House Gardens and Niddrie House Grove area, almost all of which had fallen into a bad state of repair, with many having lain empty for some time. Other tenants occupying properties to be refurbished have either been, or are in the process of being, decanted into temporary accommodation while work is going on.

**Figure 4. 16** The Scotsman dated 14 November 1989: objectives of the housing Co-operative [4-16]

The most critical phase of the rehabilitation was the demolition of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses. The subsequently vacated land was to be redeveloped for new low-rise housing. The Housing Corporation indicated that it did not consider the rehabilitation of the tower blocks to be the best value for its money. In July 1988, the NHPRG submitted a feasibility report on refurbishment of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank. The report demonstrated the residents' belief that their proposal for refurbishment and management of the tower blocks would overcome the problems which had made the buildings unpopular in the past.<sup>1</sup> Residents of Niddrie House argued that the demolition of the tower blocks would not be appropriate given current and anticipated future demand of small housing units in the area. Figure 4.17 shows the summary of the NHPRG report, which indicated reasons for which decision to demolish the tower blocks should be reconsidered.

<p>The rehabilitation proposals would require substantial capital investment involving financial backing from the Housing Corporation, the Government Agency which finances housing association work. However, the Housing Corporation initially indicated that it did not view rehabilitation as providing the best value for its money. NHPRG has recently completed a report of its work, and hopes that the Corporation will reconsider the potential of improving the flat blocks based on this information. This leaflet outlines the Group's rehabilitation and management proposals for the multi's and its consideration of the possibility of demolition and replacement by a new development.</p>	<p><b>SUMMARY</b></p>
<p>If you wish any additional information, please contact <b>PETER RAE</b> or <b>NIALL ALEXANDER</b> at 4/1 Niddrie House Square, Tel: 657 3531.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 NHPRG proposals envisage a complete rehabilitation of the blocks both externally and within individual flats, with reception staff to help provide better security for residents. In addition, the areas surrounding the multi's should be properly landscaped to provide both car parking and a pleasant external environment. This will result in dwellings of a similar standard to those proposed for Hunters Hall Housing Co-operative and the refurbished District Council flats.</li> <li>2 The proposals are similar to those which have been implemented by other organisations in the successful rehabilitation and management of multi-storey accommodation.</li> <li>3 In order to develop these proposals and provide the necessary management services, it is intended to involve either Edinvar or Link Housing Associations - who have assisted the Group to draw up their proposals. The longer term aim is to create a community based housing association which will involve local residents in the management of the two blocks.</li> </ol>
<p>Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses Feasibility Study Summary of Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group July 1988</p>	

**Figure 4. 17** Summary of the NHPRG proposal, demonstrating the residents' confidence in the rehabilitation of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank House, providing that sufficient management could be arranged by the resident group [4-17]

<sup>1</sup> NHPRG proposals, 1988, p.1

Following the Housing Corporation's suggestion that it would consider demolition of the multi's and their replacement by new low rise housing, NHPRG considered the case for such a course of action. It was felt by the Group that the decision overlooked the value of the rehabilitation proposals for Niddrie House. In addition, it ignored the following factors:-

- \* The housing needs in the Niddrie House area have never been properly established. This means that low rise housing will not necessarily allow greater flexibility in meeting housing needs of local people.

- \* The proposals are well within the Corporation's financial guidelines for rehabilitation work for two and four person units. As 112 good quality flats would result from the proposals, in this sense, they represent good value for money.

- \* The District Council forecasts that over the next 5-10 years there will be a relatively greater increase in the demand for the size of accommodation already provided in the multi-storey blocks. This is due to an increased demand from both young single and elderly people - two of the groups best suited to living high rise housing. This lends credibility to the Group's proposals and their belief that there remains a viable role for the two blocks.

**Figure 4. 18** Reason given by the NHPRG for refurbishment of tower blocks [4-18]

The residents believed that refurbished multi-storey flats would benefit Niddrie Houses in the future. The NHPRG proposal outlined three key reasons for refurbishment of the tower blocks. Firstly, Niddrie House had established a sufficient number of large and medium low-rise houses within the area and an additional number of such houses would not facilitate flexibility in meeting housing needs of local people. Secondly, estimated cost of the rehabilitation was within the Housing Corporation's financial guideline. Thirdly, within 5-10 years demand for smaller sized accommodation would increase in the Niddrie area according to Edinburgh District Council's demographic forecasts. At the end of the summary, the resident group expressed its opinion that a community-based housing association was the most appropriate way in which the problems of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank could

be tackled. Therefore, the NHPRG requested the Housing Corporation and Edinburgh Housing Committee to reconsider the decision to demolish the tower blocks.

The report recommends that the Housing Corporation review its decision, and that in association with the District Council it adopts the proposals as a basis for tackling the problems of the two blocks. It is felt that the idea of a community based housing association is the most appropriate as this would provide the best opportunity for the aspirations and wishes of tenants to be met.

Summary of feasibility study of Tweedsmuir & Teviotbank House, NHPRG PROPOSALS, 1988

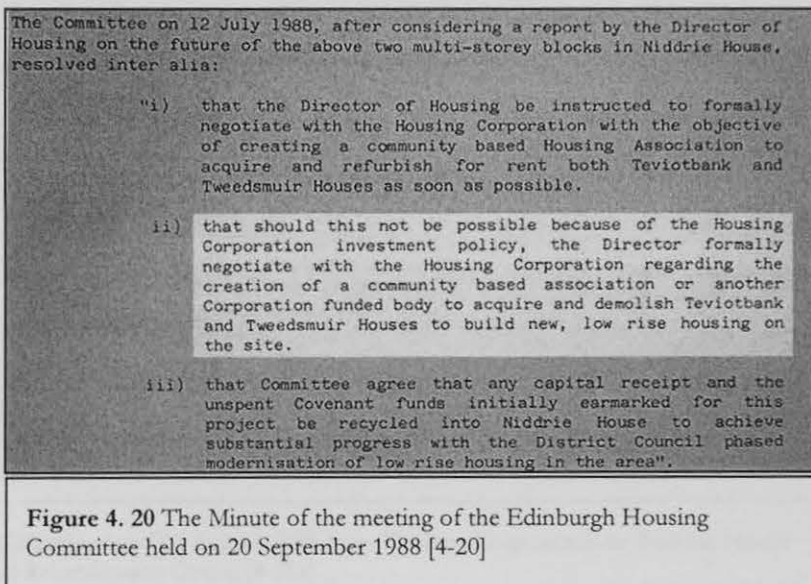
**Figure 4. 19** shows conclusion of NHPRG proposal, 1988 [4-19]

In reply to the NHPRG proposal, Mr. Andrew Leslie, Assistant Director-Scotland of the Housing Corporation sent a letter dated August 11<sup>th</sup> 1988, to Mr Eric McGovern, Esq. chairman of the NHPRG, explaining reasons for the viewpoint of the Housing Corporation towards the redevelopment of multi-storey buildings. Mr Leslie explained that tower blocks were owned by Edinburgh District Council, and therefore that the



future of the tower blocks was ultimately for the District Council to decide upon. The letter emphasised the right of the Housing Corporation to make independent investment decisions on redevelopment of housing. For Niddrie House, the Corporation had already made a commitment to make a £5 million investment in the estate. Secondly, refurbishment of the Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank was estimated at £2.8 million. The Housing Corporation considered that the investment would be unjustified for a place where most people do not wish to live. Finally, Mr. Leslie confirmed that a priority of the Housing Corporation was to support 'uprooting' solutions for housing problems. Concerning these two tower blocks, demolition was the preferred solution (See Figure 4.21a and 4.21b).

In a meeting of the Housing Committee, held on September 20<sup>th</sup> 1988, the Committee resolved that refurbishment of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank was not possible because of the Housing Corporation's investment policy and that demolition of the tower blocks would be undertaken in order to redevelop the site for new low-rise housing. (See Figure 4.20) However, mirror image of Niddrie House redevelopment was created in Greendykes housing estate. (See location in figure 4.1) Low and medium rise houses in Greendykes were demolished and the high rise were refurbished. This was probably resulted from a housing policy that was intended to allocate Greendykes housing area for single and elderly tenants and small family and Niddrie House for family with children.



# The Housing Corporation

Eric McGovern Esq  
Chairman  
Niddrie House Planning and  
Rehabilitation Group  
4/1 Niddrie House Square  
EDINBURGH  
EH16 4UP

Edinburgh Regional Office  
Rosebery House,  
9 Haymarket Terrace,  
Edinburgh EH12 5YA

Telephone 031-337 0044

Ext

Fax 031-313 2680

Your Ref:

ABL/JS

Our Ref:

11 August 1988

Dear Eric

## NIDDRIE HOUSE ESTATE REGENERATION TEVIOTBANK AND TWEEDSMUIR HOUSE REFURBISHMENT

Thank you for your letter of 7th July 1988 which I have discussed with John Richards who has asked me to send this reply on his behalf. As you know the Housing Corporation is committed to assisting the District Council and local residents with the overall regeneration of the Niddrie House Estate and fully recognises the key role the residents are playing in the formulation and implementation of strategies for tackling the problems of the Estate. The Corporation's commitment in terms of investment into the Estate already stands at over £5 million in respect of the Hunter's Hall Co-operative where the residents will have full control over the shaping of plans for their houses.

With regard to the two multi-storey blocks I want to make the obvious point that they are owned by Edinburgh District Council and ultimately it is for the District Council to decide upon the most appropriate course of action for its houses and its remaining tenants. The Corporation agreed to consider the options for the two blocks but this agreement seems to have been translated by the Group into a firm commitment to fund a locally based Housing Association to purchase and refurbish the blocks.

Only recently were the estimated costs of refurbishment made available to the Corporation. I should say here that the refurbishment costs were not assessed against the RIC since this is clearly an inappropriate yardstick and was devised to assess the viability of comprehensive improvements projects in traditional 19th Century tenements. Your calculations therefore about how the scheme should be regarded in relation to the RIC are inappropriate. What we did consider was whether or not the Housing Corporation should invest over £24,000 per unit to refurbish two high rise blocks which are almost empty and where most people obviously do not wish to live. Ultimately it was our opinion that investment of approx £2.8 m could not be justified on this project.

Headquarters: 149 Tottenham Court Road,  
London W1P 0BN. Telephone 01-347 9400

Edinburgh Regional Office: Rosebery House,  
9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5YA. Telephone 031-337 0044

Telex: 941 361 H/12  
Fax: 031-313 2680

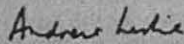
HL

Figure 4. 21a Letter dated 11 August 1988 from Housing Corporation to Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group [4-21a]

We also considered the possible alternative of providing finance for an Association to acquire, demolish and build replacement housing on the cleared site and came to the conclusion that for approximately the same costs as refurbishment, some 45 low rise houses could be provided. This seemed to us a far better long-term solution considering the overall objective of regenerating Niddrie House, but this option is only there as a last resort if the District Council does not wish to proceed itself with the refurbishment of the blocks, or does not wish to or cannot sell to a private developer. In these circumstances we would wish to discuss with the District Council and Niddrie House residents how the option of demolition and newbuild might be progressed, and whether it would be something for Hunter's Hall Co-op to undertake or for another Association to take on. As with the Co-op, local residents would have a major say in how the cleared site would be redeveloped so I confirm that the Corporation's attitude to the bottom-up approach is unchanged. This should not be confused however with the Corporation's right to make independent investment decisions as we have done in this case by declining to provide the necessary finance for the refurbishment of the multi-storey blocks.

I would say in conclusion that knowing our views on refurbishment, Edinburgh District Council now needs to make a decision on the future of the two blocks after which we will, if appropriate, be pleased to enter into further discussions with the Council and Niddrie House residents. I have copied this letter to Mr Mel Wilson for his information.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW LESLIE  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-SCOTLAND

Figure 4. 21b Letter dated 11 August 1988 from Housing Corporation to Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group [4-20b]

In 1989, the Housing Corporation became Scottish Homes. As a national housing agency for Scotland, Scottish Homes continued to encourage the privatisation of social housing in conjunction with the idea of community-based housing-associations. Scottish Homes and the Hunter Hall Housing Co-operative reached an agreement that the rehabilitation of Niddrie House was to proceed with the demolition of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses. The vacant land was to be redeveloped for new low-rise flats for small families and single residents. The Housing Committee agreed with this proposal and resolved that the tower blocks would be transferred to Hunter Hall

Housing Co-operative for further action. The demolition was however delayed by financial problems. In May 1989, the Scottish Office valued Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses at minus £200,000. The use of the 'negative valuation power' caused financial difficulties in transferring the tower block, because the City council had to pay £200,000 to transfer the tower block to Hunter Hall Housing Co-operative merely for demolition. This put the City Council into an uncomfortable situation. Finally, in 1991, Scottish Homes offered funding for the demolition so that the rehabilitation could proceed. The demolition of the tower blocks took place on September 8<sup>th</sup> 1991. The residents were very cheerful and delighted with the demolition. Children prepared to collect rubbles from the two tower blocks to sell at the opening party for the community centre. Iain Rorke, Housing Co-ordinator, said "*it might not be the Berlin Wall, but the effect of those flats coming down brought the same sense of freedom to people.*" The Edinburgh public was expecting a spectacular scene, since Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank were the first high-rise buildings to be demolished by explosive. Two thousand pounds of explosive charges were set onto the two tower blocks but Tweedsmuir House did not collapse after the explosion. Charles Moran, managing director of the controlled demolition group explained to Evening News "*...the centre of the blocks has blown up but they are being held up by their wall...*"<sup>1</sup> The demolition team had to break the ground floor wall to trigger the building to collapse.

**Figure 4. 22** The Scotsman, 9 September 1991 shows Edinburgh first explosive demolition which failed to tear down Teviotbank House [4-22]



<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 9 September 1991



#### 4.4. Niddrie Houses after the Rehabilitation Project

The main concept of the Niddrie House rehabilitation conformed to “security conscious design”. Entry control system was installed at all buildings so that better security would be achieved. Fences were introduced to the buildings in order to create a clear sense of territory. The rehabilitation also gave the housing a new appearance. Concrete open-space was transformed into softer landscape with grass and plants. Small gardens were introduced in front of each building. The Hunter Hall Co-operative also prepared to encourage small business to set up in the area. Shops and a post office were opened after the project was completed. It also provided an apprenticeship scheme for local people to provide skilled labour in the area, in connection with the Hart Builders. The City Council retained 54 houses at Niddrie House Drive as social housing. The council-owned housing was treated with the same rehabilitation programme as that of the Hunter Hall Housing Co-operative. Edinburgh District Council continued to provide consultation for administration system, management and arranging transfer of properties. Niddrie House became a large housing estate providing multi types of tenure.



**Figure 4. 23** shows refurbished houses in Niddrie House Drive which were under the management of Hunter Hall Housing Co-operative, 2001 [4-23]

**Figure 4. 24**  
shows  
changes in the  
layout of  
Niddrie  
House before  
and after the  
rehabilitation  
[4-24]



The layout of Niddrie House was changed considerably. Most of the original characteristics were replaced by a more traditional style in terms of both buildings design and planning. The two tower blocks which was the landmark for the estate had been removed. Subdivided courtyards were filled with new houses. Tree and grass areas were introduced into the area to replace hard landscape of concrete parking spaces. Each house had its own clear territory instead of communal space that had existed previously.

In 2001, 10 years after the rehabilitation project, Niddrie House had two different areas which could visually be distinguished. One of these was council-owned houses and the other was privately owned houses. The physical conditions of the two areas were



totally different. In one area, the houses under the management of Hunter Hall Housing co-operative and other housing associations were in good condition. All of the houses were occupied. Waste disposal and other services were up to the satisfactory standard. By contrast, the council housing in Niddrie House Park and Niddrie House Square was in a deprived condition. The residents did not form residents' group. Gardens and the landscape were not maintained. According to Stuart Avinau, a housing officer,<sup>1</sup> the City Maintenance Unit allocated this area in low priority for maintenance due to the large number of unoccupied houses. The children's playing area was not in use because there were broken glasses, needles and dangerous items all over the area.

**Figure 4. 25**  
Niddrie House  
Park lacked  
maintenance, rear  
garden (left) and  
rear side of the  
flats [4-25]



Niddrie House Park was in a severely dilapidating condition. Large numbers of houses were vacant. It was evident of drugs abuse as drug addicts left needles on staircases. Entrance control system was damage in most of the buildings. Mr Avinau commented that vandalism was still the most serious problem. As often as every fortnight, a group of vandals with a suspected age of between 14 and 25, collected inflammable materials from vacant houses and left-furniture on the street, to make a bonfire. Residents did not take any domestic responsibility in order to retain the property in an acceptable sanitary

<sup>1</sup> Interview in October 2001



condition.<sup>1</sup> The decline of Niddrie House Park was the result of antisocial behaviour and also irresponsible residents.



**Figure 4. 26** Niddrie House Park. the building was almost unoccupied and lack of maintenance was visually noticeable [4-26]

As seen, the demolition of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses appeared to be a key factor facilitating the successful rehabilitation of Niddrie House. These tower blocks were related to many housing problems and may have been unsuitable for Niddrie House, however it seems that the buildings were not the entire cause of the problems. The next section will discuss the factors involved in the decisions on the improvement of Niddrie House and the demolition of the tower blocks.

#### **4.5. The Factors involved in the Decision-Making Process**

##### **4.5.1. *Economic consideration***

The total budget for the improvement of Niddrie House housing estate was estimated at £5 million. This amount of funding covered the full refurbishment of 500 units of low-rise housing. According to the Assistance Director-Scotland of the Housing Corporation, the estimated cost of full refurbishment of the tower blocks was £ 2.8

<sup>1</sup> Visual observation by the researcher when visiting the estate in October 2001

million which would have provided 112 high-rise flats. As seen, the cost of refurbishing the tower blocks was considerably higher than that of the tenements. Therefore, the Housing Committee considered that the refurbishment of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses was not a cost-effective investment.

In this case study, cost-effectiveness appears as a critical factor in the decision to demolish the tower blocks in Niddrie housing area, nevertheless, this conclusion becomes inconsistent when applied to the situation in Greendykes, which was located next to Niddrie House. (Cf. p76) Economic consideration is therefore a critical criterion in the decision making insofar as the decisions are considered within the framework of the housing policy

#### *4.5.2. Image of housing*

The rehabilitation of Niddrie House was intended not only to improve physical environment but also to regain the confidence of residents and also the public. In the public eye, Niddrie House, with Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank House, projected an extremely negative image of housing. Throughout the 20 years of its existence, Niddrie House had been condemned as one of the most depressed housing areas of Edinburgh. Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank House were condemned as monstrosities and as the cause of depressive environment. Many of the residents however believed that there was a strong sense of community within the area. They had expressed their intention to remain living in the area. Nonetheless, housing conditions had to be improved and afterwards to be adequately maintained. There was a considerable change in the image of Niddrie House when its rehabilitation was completed. Niddrie House became a low-rise housing estate. In addition, the large open expanses of concrete, which were much disliked by most residents, were used as the sites for new, infill housing. A consensus opinion was that the changes had improved the quality of life. The rehabilitation and the demolition of the tower blocks were perceived as a milestone of the area's improvement, from which Niddrie House's community could develop. On the other hand, the image and appearance of the area could be perceived as psychological issues. As seen, social problems reoccurred in Niddrie House Park, a council-owned housing,

regardless of the new appearance of the housing. Changes of appearance and image in the area can the regain confidence of residents who have been living in declined area, but, responsibility and sufficient management are still required in order to sustain the quality of the housing.

#### **4.5.3.     *Functional Performance of Building***

The case study has demonstrated some advantages of tenements over high-rise flats, which justify Scottish Homes decision to support demolition of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses. First, these tower blocks had appalling records of technical problems. Although the tower blocks had sound structural stability, they had problems related to dampness and condensation and the break down of electricity and lifts. Negative history of the buildings undermined the confidence of the public, prospective residents and Scottish Homes.

#### **4.5.4.     *Demographics and sizes of dwellings***

Demand for a smaller size of housing was a reason for which Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank should have been reused. Hunter Hall Housing Co-operative considered that accommodation for family had been sufficiently provided but, at the time, the number of smaller flats seemed inadequate. According to the Edinburgh District Council's demographic forecast, smaller-size household were likely to increase in the next 5-10 years from 1989. This household type included the elderly, single people, young couples. As a result, the Hunter Hall Co-operative considered that the tower blocks would serve such increasing demand in the future. It considered that the area should have accommodations which were suitable for these people. Considering this issue in a bigger picture, it seems reasonable for the Housing Committee to demolish these tower blocks because it had already provided accommodation for small size household in Greendykes. Niddrie House was to be a housing area for larger family. According to the Housing Committee experience, it believed that separation of different groups of resident may help to reduce conflicts of interest within that housing area.

#### 4.5.5. *The Form of the Dwelling and Its Operational Environment*

Each form of dwelling performs well in a particular operational environment. In practice, high-rise residential buildings are suitable to specific life styles and seem to require a complicated system of operation in order to perform well. As seen in this case study, the factors that had an impact on the functional performance of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses were the type of residents, the maintenance policy and the building management system. High-rise housing is prone to antisocial behaviour. According to the theory of Newman (1973), Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses did not have adequate natural surveillance on the upper floors or in the area around the buildings. There was no surveillance of the entrances to the buildings because the tower blocks were also separated from the main road. The corridors and foyer were not in use most of the time. This made the tower blocks vulnerable to vandals and thieves, especially during the day-time. The pedestrian subway near the tower blocks was also dangerous to use at night-time. There were few everyday activities taking place around the tower blocks to provide natural surveillance. It was also impossible to rely on the police force for 24 hour patrols. If the tower blocks had been located in an inner city area, surveillance would have been provided by passers-by and shop-keepers, resulting in a safer environment.

High-rise flats are most suitable to the lifestyle of new couples, professionals and people who spend most of their time outside their houses, because it is easier to look after one apartment than a house. Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses would have been attractive to these target groups if they had been located near high density urban areas with sufficient facilities and services such as grocery shops, launderette, or a supermarket. Secondly, living in tower blocks demands more responsibility and discipline. High rise housing also demands a higher operation cost than tenements due to necessary facilities such as lifts, fire-exits, lobbies, corridors, and machine rooms. It needs 24-hour caretaking for entry control and facility management. These elements require extra maintenance cost which should be the shared responsibility of the residents.

Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank House were located in an operational environment unsuitable for high-rise buildings, and were built as 'affordable social housing' for low-income residents. These people were unable to cope with the extra pressure of living in high-rise due to their social and economic disadvantages. Many were in serious economic difficulty. Many also had problems relating to drug abuse, antisocial behaviour, and family breakdown. A few problematic families are sufficient to cause social disintegration within any housing estate. This group of people need accommodation with special care. The evidence of this study shows that they have difficulties regardless of the type of housing or the management of it. With the benefit of hindsight, the City Council did not prepare adequate resources to operate and maintain high-rise mass-housing. Accordingly, the decline of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank was, to a large extent, caused by the mismanagement policy of the Edinburgh Housing Committee. High-rise buildings seem to be incompatible with management policy of social mass-housing for low-income residents in Edinburgh.

#### **4.6. Summary and Conclusions**

Niddrie House housing estate, particularly Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses, experienced serious vandalism and social problems. In 1985, the problems in the tower blocks had become intolerable, resulting in a large number of unoccupied flats in the area. Edinburgh Housing Committee decided to undertake the comprehensive rehabilitation of Niddrie House, including the demolition of Tweedsmuir and Teviotbank Houses. The demolition was perceived as a milestone of housing improvement in this area. The reasons given for the demolition are as follows.

- Economic considerations
- The image of the housing
- Functional performance of the buildings
- Compatibility of dwelling form and its environment

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **The Demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This case study examines reasons behinds the decision on the demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses, twin tower blocks which were built as part of the Leith Fort housing estate in Edinburgh. The twin tower blocks had undergone housing problems related to structural defects, substandard building performance and residents with antisocial behaviours. The tower blocks eventually declined into an uninhabitable state and were faced with demolition. The decision to demolish these tower blocks was a long process involving multiple factors which the case study aims to identify.

The demolition of the tower blocks was probably the most publicised case in Edinburgh because of the controversy over their cultural value. It attracted public interest and generated public debates in national and local newspapers. On the one hand, residents of Leith Fort and the public strongly supported the decision to demolish. On the other hand, a pressure group sought to obtain a legal protection for the tower blocks from Historic Scotland so as to reverse the decision to demolish. This group believed that the tower blocks were of high architectural value and should have been classified as category-A listed building which was the statutory status of historic buildings of national and international importance. Concerning socioeconomic value, there was a proposal for the refurbishment of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses so as to reuse them as an internationally-franchised hotel. The attempt to conserve and reuse the twin tower blocks did not, however, succeed. Edinburgh City Council had considered all the

proposed possibilities and finally concluded that the proposal was financially unviable and proceeded with the demolition plan. The decision to demolish the twin tower blocks involved reasons which are both implicitly and explicitly stated. This case study aims to identify these reasons and the way in which each reason was considered in the decision-making process.

## **5.2. Background of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses**

### ***5.2.1. Leith Fort Housing design competition***

The original design of the Leith Fort housing estate was an award-winning project in a housing design competition held by the Edinburgh Corporation in 1957. Leith Fort was eagerly anticipated as an example of high standard housing design despite the prevailing practice of negotiated contracts, or 'package deals'. Around the 1960s, an enormous numbers of social housing-units were built under such contracts in Scotland and the United Kingdom in general. High-rise building was a form of modern dwelling which stemmed from the concept of Utopia, aiming to provide a healthy decent home for everyone, especially people on low income. This idea was applied extensively, in conjunction with knowledge in sociological science of habitation, in order to revolutionise people's living standards. Housing design and construction were guided by economic factors and the functional requirements which underlay the values and characteristics of the buildings themselves rather than their aesthetic aspect. To a certain extent, these modern housing development programmes appeared ambitious. Architects and builders often had to work with demanding functional requirements. For Edinburgh, the ideas were employed to solve the slum problems of the inner city and the dock-site areas. Social mass-housing developments mushroomed, especially, in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The possibilities of this Utopia becoming a reality were envisaged as being in line with the Government housing policy and also with the economic practicality of new construction technology. Leith Fort Housing exemplified revolutionary reform in Scotland's social housing.

The Leith Fort Housing design competition seems to have derived from a political decision to demonstrate that architectural practice in Edinburgh did not depend entirely



upon political and financial factors. Around the end of the 1950s, the Edinburgh Corporation had made initial moves towards negotiated contracts for the house-building on various sites around Edinburgh.<sup>1</sup> However, the Edinburgh Architectural Association raised an objection argument over the way in which architectural practice was being carried out by the local government. Glendinning described the event:

"Some of these (14 tower blocks) were built, but there was a big row, orchestrated by the EAA (*Edinburgh Architectural Association*) with the support of Government architects and RIAS (*The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland*), etc. In recompense, the EAA successfully pressed the programme administrator to agree to allocate one prominent site in the prestige Leith redevelopment area to a national architectural competition, 'to show that the City was not so philistine after all'. The site that was settled on was Leith Fort, thus Leith Fort is in a sense significant as a major case of bucking a big trend" (Glendinning, Miles, Lecture on Leith Fort, 19 November 1992)

Although the Leith Fort housing design competition emerged from political pressure, it was nevertheless accredited as being of a high standard, with as many as twenty-eight competitors presenting housing schemes. Professor Leslie Martin, the assessor of the competition, was a former architect of the London County Council and was himself held in high esteem. Participants included some highly qualified architects such as the established firm of Robert Matthew and Johnson Marshall (RMJM) whose design won second prize. The RMJM design was reused for Hutchesontown B, a housing development in Glasgow, in the following year.<sup>2</sup>

The winner of the Leith Fort housing development and of the premium of 750 guineas was John E.A Baikie, A.R.I.B.A., A.R.I.A.S. and Associates. This group of young architects were John Baikie, Michael Shaw Stewart and Frank Perry. The group did not yet have an office when they won the competition in January 1958. Subsequently, John Baikie and Michael Shaw Stewart left their present employment and established a partnership which was soon joined by Frank Perry. The first stage of the project was Cairngorm and Grampian Houses. The original designs of the second and third phrases were extensively altered.<sup>3</sup> These tower blocks were of 21-storeys high, and linked

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Glendinning, M., "a lecture note on Leith Fort", the speaker's personal collection, 19 November 1992.

<sup>3</sup> The initial aim of the Housing Committee was to abandon the second and third phrases. The minute of the meeting of Housing Committee, Improvement Sub-Committee, 28 February 1965, 219

together at the podium. The top floor of the podium was claimed to have a view across the Fife of Forth. The construction took around two years and Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were opened in 1962.

### 5.2.2. *A Building Description*

The Edinburgh Housing Corporation acquired the site of Leith Fort from the War Office, when the latter was relocated elsewhere in the mid 1950s. The site contained old military stone- buildings – the ruin of an 18<sup>th</sup> century stone fort. The available site was in awkward shape but provided a reasonable area of land within the vicinity of the City. The *Builder* described the site as 15 acres situated in the west part of Leith close to the shores of the Forth. The site was well elevated, commanding a wide view over the Firth, with the Fife coast five miles to the North.<sup>1</sup>

The ground floor comprised car parking spaces, three shops and service rooms. The first floor or podium level included a lift hall, a laundrette, a caretaker's office and a toddler's play area. Each typical floor-plan of the tower contained 4 units of flats with a communal area. The flats were both single-bedroom and two-bedrooms. The architects arranged two types of floor-plans: type a) 2 single and 2 two-bedroom flats and type b) 4 two-bedroom flats. The arrangements were designed to accommodate various age groups on each floor. The aim was to recreate a balance of age groups as in any natural growing community. Each flat had a fire exit through one of its bedrooms. The interior designs of the flats were equipped with hot and cold water, kitchen, bathroom and built-in furniture.

Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were well planned from both the architectural and sociological viewpoints of that time. The tower blocks were designed with a semi-prefabrication construction system for which the components had to be specifically tailored. Cairngorm and Grampian House were built with in-situ concrete frames, clad with light grey pre-cast concrete panels. The concrete panels were specifically designed with the Le Corbusier's module system, which reflected on the pattern of the façade.

---

<sup>1</sup> Special representatives, Leith Fort Housing Competition, (Edinburgh *The Builder*, 7 February 1958) 261

The site of the panels was- 8ft.1/2 inch, in overall height, with vertical joints occurring at 4ft. 7in., 6ft. and 7ft. 5in.. The inner-leaves of the external wall and partitions were made of light weight cellular concrete. (See 5.4.1 structural integrity)



**Figure 5. 1** Aerial view of Leith Fort Housing Estate in 1991 [5-1]

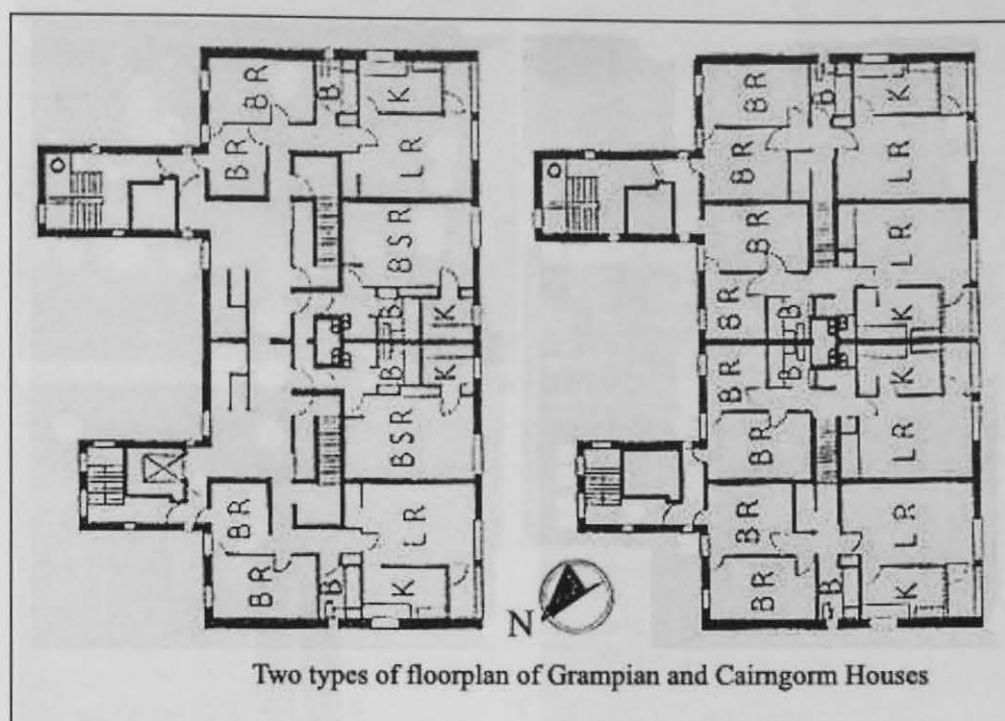


Figure 5. 2 Typical floor-plans of the tower, Grampian and Cairngorm Houses [5-2]

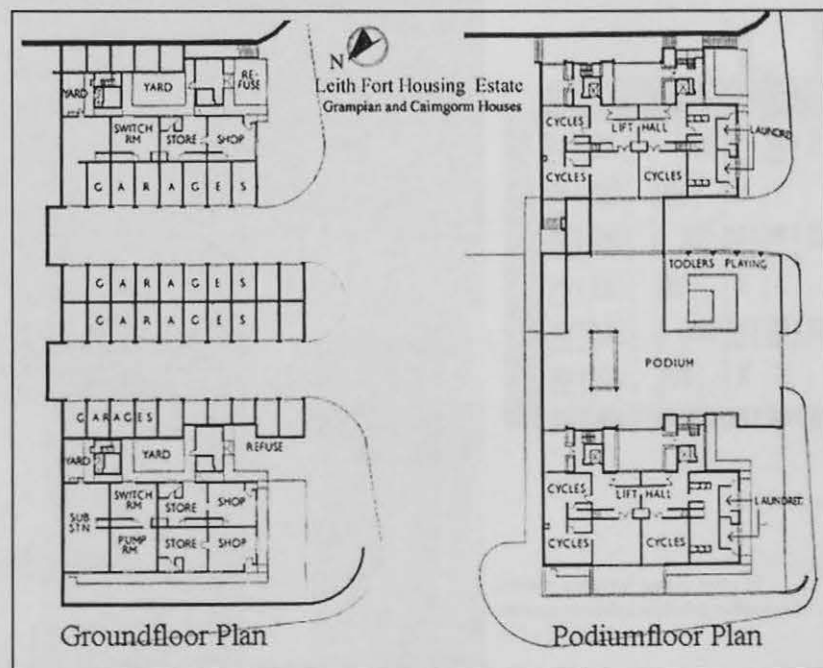


Figure 5. 3 Ground floor and podium floor-plan [5-3]

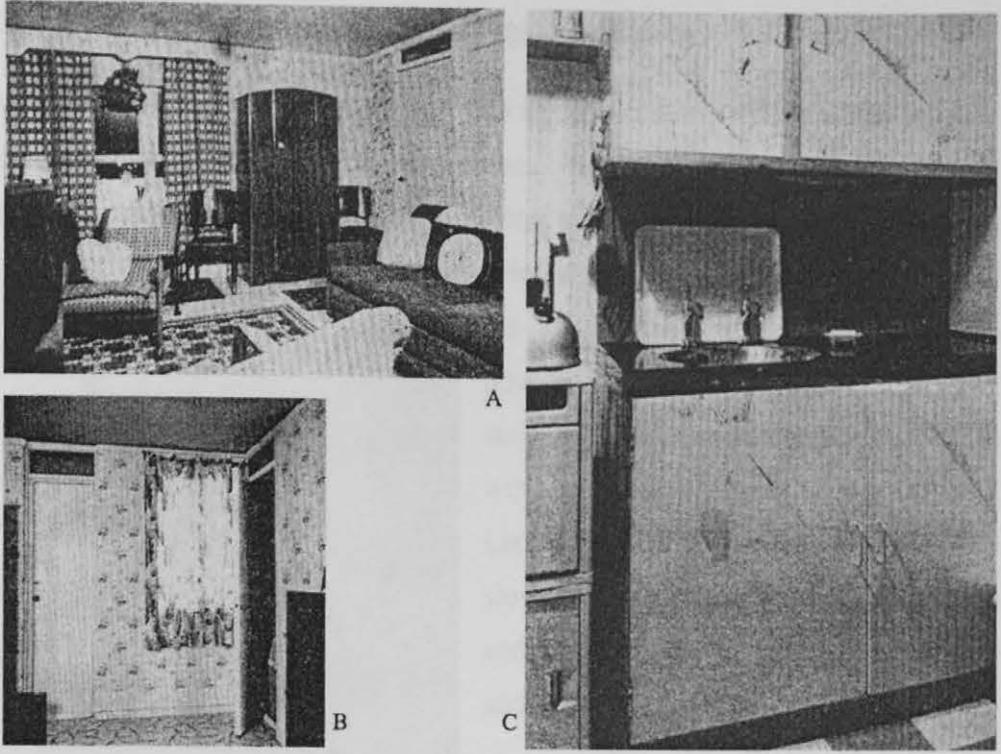


Figure 5. 4 Interior A) Living room B) Bedroom with fire exit on left door, C) Kitchen [5-4]



Above: External panels were of various modules with the influence of Le Corbusier

Left: View of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses from Lindsay Street

Figure 5. 5 External views of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses [5-5]

### 5.2.3. *Image of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses*

This was the first time in Scotland that tower blocks were constructed with 1.25-ton pre-cast concrete panels, assembled by high-cranes without scaffolding. During the construction, the buildings were reported as having problems with high wind and mist.



**Figure 5. 6** Cairngorm Houses under construction during 1960-62 [5-6]

"Hoisting heavy blocks over 180 feet in the air and placing them delicately in position was a skilled and complicated task in ideal weather conditions. Rain, wind and sea fog made it impossible".<sup>1</sup> Lack of experience in such new methods slowed down the construction process and also resulted in poor craftsmanship and defective construction details.

The architects' comparative lack of experience was of considerable concern.

The Edinburgh Corporation did not expect this remarkable project to be won by a group of young architects. Practically, the original design had to be adjusted a considerable amount because of construction costs and technological capacity of Scottish construction industry at the time. Alexander Steele, the City Architect, made extra effort to develop the design. He "*tried to hedge round the three by giving them his chief housing architect, Harry Corner, almost as a chaperone.*"<sup>2</sup> A number of specialists had to be assigned to work on various areas of the building's construction. For example, Messrs. Shaw Stewart, Baikie & Perry recommended that Mr Jorgen Varming of Denmark be appointed as a consultant for the preparation of the heating systems. Mr Varming was one of the foremost experts in Europe, having wide experience in all types of heating systems.<sup>3</sup> Alterations to the design of the tower blocks took almost 2 years to complete. Grampian and Cairngorm Houses had always had the image of controversial buildings and were always receiving

<sup>1</sup> Evening News and Dispatch (Edinburgh), 9 April 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Glendinning, M., "a lecture note on Leith Fort", the speaker's personal collection, 19 November 1992.

<sup>3</sup> The minutes of the meeting of the Housing Committee, Improvement sub-committee, 10 June 1958,



attention from the public. With such a high level of architectural design, it is not surprising that the Edinburgh Corporation and the public had high expectations for the Leith Fort housing.

Throughout the 30 years of their existence, the tower blocks received both praise and criticism. On the one hand, the Architects' Journal praised the tower blocks as the work



**Figure 5. 7** Leith Fort was praised as pioneering work in Evening News 9 April 1965 [5-7]

of true pioneers. The journal gave its professional verdict thus, "*Testing the result on the basis of workability and servicing, cost and construction techniques, consumer opinion and also aesthetics produces a credit balance on almost every count.*"<sup>1</sup> Gillian Clark of the Scotsman reported on July 10 1965, that the tower blocks performed well as a dwelling. Residents seemed to be satisfied with the interior design and floor-plan,

which conformed to the sociological science of modern habitat. Most of the residents were also satisfied with services in the buildings, such as the under-floor heating, the refuse disposal system. Nonetheless, one of the drawbacks of the tower blocks was external appearance. The residents and the majority of the Edinburgh people had negative opinions on external concrete panels. In an edition of the Evening News, dated April 17<sup>th</sup> 1963, a Labour councillor criticised the tower blocks as '*a grey uninspiring uninviting monstrosity*'. The criticism provoked an immediate response from the architects, who claimed that the criticism was unjustified and would damage their reputation. They claimed that such criticism was a political rather than an architectural issue. Finally, the Housing Committee had to announce through the press that the criticism was a personal opinion and not a reflection on the architect reputation. Nevertheless, the Evening News reported that a number of councillors expressed negative opinions towards these modern tower blocks.

<sup>1</sup> "Leith Fort", *Architects' Journal Information Library*, (7 April 1965): 838

## ARCHITECTS GIVEN AN ASSURANCE ON DESIGN

Edinburgh architects who won 750 guineas for their design of multi-storey flats have asked Edinburgh Corporation to protect their professional reputation.

Recently their design for the multi-storey blocks of flats at Leith Fort—came in for considerable criticism. One Edinburgh councillor described the flats as "a grey, uninspiring, uninviting monstrosity."

Now the architects Shaw, Stewart, Baikie and Perry, 63 North Castle Street, Edinburgh, give their reply.

### 'POLITICS'

In a letter to the town-clerk they pointed out that the corporation had the opportunity to examine the plans for nearly three years before giving their approval to proceed with the project.

"Furthermore, our designs were selected by them from

designs submitted by architects from all over Scotland and this was the basis of our appointment," stated the letter.

The letter continued: "We have our professional reputation to consider and we have decided not to become involved in arguments in the Press which are more concerned with politics than architecture."

"We would like to know your attitude and that of the Housing Committee on this matter as soon as possible."

The letter to the town-clerk followed an attack by Progressive Councillor Maurice Ferry on multi-storey buildings in general. He said of the Leith Fort flats: "From an amenity viewpoint there isn't an uglier building in Edinburgh."

"They don't even have a window facing the sea. The block is a grey, uninspiring, uninviting monstrosity."

Referring to a "Dispatch" report of what Mr Ferry said, the firm's letter stated: "While we expect criticism of our building we would not expect our clients to express it in such strong terms to the Press with no previous reference to ourselves."

### OPPOSITE VIEW

It went on: "Knowledgeable critics have in fact opposite points of view."

The Housing Committee decided yesterday that the opinions of Councillor Ferry made no reflection on the reputation of the architects as it was "an entirely personal point of view."

When asked if they would consider approving the design, Labour Councillors Donald Renton and Donald Swanson jumped to their feet saying: "No."

The committee decided to "keep an open mind" on the subject.

Evening News, 17 April 1963

Figure 5. 8 The appearance of Grampian and Cairngorm is at the centre of a polemical debate Evening News 17 April 1963 [5-8]

### 5.2.4. The decline of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses

Grampian and Cairngorm Houses received greater criticism when they came into fully use. Within 18 months of opening, the tower blocks were facing serious problems from vandalism. It was reported that "*the vandals, mainly non-residents, 'play hell' with the lifts, break glass and have been known to set fire to the lift motor room*".<sup>1</sup> Caretakers were employed but they were unable to provide the surveillance necessary to many areas of the buildings. Vandalism was persistent throughout the buildings' life. Complaints also included inadequate craftsmanship and construction details. The residents pointed out that their flats were leaked when there was heavy rain, especially on the north side facing the Firth of Forth. The Evening News reported that the tower blocks received insufficient maintenance and were being poorly managed. The report included a complaint about maintenance of the surroundings. Young boys were '*walking like trapeze artists balanced on nearby crumbling slum walls; 'fall-out' in open heated cellars beneath the tower block: and a plan to build a public convenience in full view of tenants' windows*'.<sup>2</sup> Residents of Leith Fort felt that their houses were not treated with consideration. Such incidences were psychologically disturbing for the residents and brought a bad reputation to the area.

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh), 9 April 1963

<sup>2</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 25 September 1969

Residents of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses usually had difficulties in using facilities and basic services. The cause of the problems seemed to be insufficient management rather than technical issues. To begin with, the density of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was 140 people per acre, which was unusually high. With only 3 shops within the tower blocks, residents had to rely on a limited number of shops in the neighbourhood. Secondly, lifts and laundry facilities often broke down. The services were usually disrupted as a consequence of continuous overuse, as well as misuse caused by the lack of appropriate supervision for these machines. There was no information available for residents about how to operate the under-floor heating

properly. There were months of the equipment constantly breaking down, with no immediate repair being carried out. The demands for repair and maintenance were higher than the arrangement made for maintenance by the supplier. Thirdly, problems seemed to include the installation of incompatible machines. Edinburgh City Council and the machine suppliers held each other responsible for maintenance and its costs. This led residents to become concerned that Leith Fort would eventually become a slum

Evening News, Thursday, September 25, 1969

# DON'T LET OUR HOMES TURN TO SLUMS...

A £300,000, 17-storey skyscraper block of flats at the heart of Leith could become a slum, says a tenants' leader, if Edinburgh Corporation are not forced into action.

Young boys walking "like trapeze artists" balanced on nearby crumbling slum walls; "fall-outs" in open-heated cellars beneath the tower block; and a plan to build a public convenience in full view of tenants' windows.

These were among complaints listed by Mr James Ford, chairman of Kirkgate House Tenants' Association, at a protest meeting of more than 40 tenants last night.

## Action pledge to tenants

Figure 5.9 Leith Fort experienced serious shortly after its completion, Evening News 25 September 1969 [5-9]

area if Edinburgh City Council were not forced into action.<sup>1</sup>

In 1989, the residents of the tower blocks invited journalists, councillors and consulting engineers to visit Grampian and Cairngorm Houses in the hope that the appalling impression of these problematic buildings would accelerate the decision-making process. The highlighted area on Figure 4.10 shows a description of the intolerable

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 25 September 1969

conditions of the tower blocks and opinions of Nannette Donaldson, a resident, and Councillor Carol Benn. There was however no further action undertaken to improve problems of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses. This was despite the fact that already in the mid 1980s, Edinburgh Housing Department, under the Housing Committee, commissioned Ove Arup & Partners Scotland to investigate the condition of the external panels and their fixings. The report, submitted in May 1986, revealed problems related to the severe decay of the panels and fixing. Although, officially, the problems had been recognised by the City Council, the decisions on the improvement of the tower blocks were not made until October 1990.

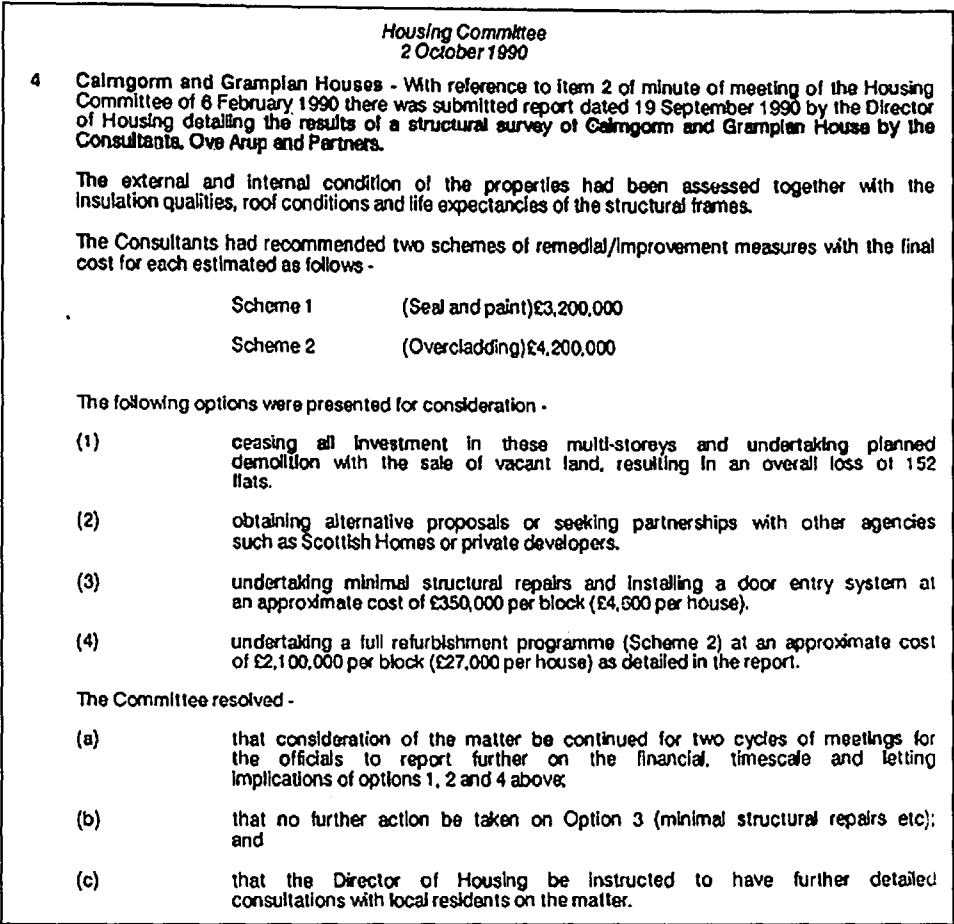
**Figure 5. 10** Housing problems at Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were at the worst stage [5-10]



### 5.3. The Decision to demolish Grampian and Cairngorm Houses

The decision-making process on the demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses began in 1985 when the Housing Committee of Edinburgh City Council assigned Ove Arup & Partners Scotland to carry out a structural survey of the tower blocks. In 1986, the firm submitted a report on '*Investigation into conditions of external panels and their fixings*'. According to the report, the structural frame of the tower blocks was in sound condition but the external panels were deteriorating severely. The result of the survey

led to 4 options for the future of the tower blocks. Figure 5.11 shows the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1990, describing details of the initial decisions on problems regarding the tower blocks.



**Figure 5. 11** Minute of meeting of Housing Committee, Edinburgh City Council, held on 2 October 1990 [5-11]

According to the minute of meeting, an initial decision made by the Housing Committee was to cease all investments in Grampian and Cairngorm Houses and to consider a demolition plan with a view to redeveloping the land. The Housing Committee agreed that a minimal repair programme at an estimated cost of £350,000 per block would not be an effective solution and it was dismissed. In consultation with Edinburgh Housing Department, the Housing Committee resolved that further considerations was to be given to 3 alternative strategies which were 1) demolition and sale of vacant land, 2) obtaining alternative proposal or seeking partnership with other agencies; 3) full



refurbishment programme at an estimated cost of £2,100,000 per block. The Housing committee made a request that the Housing Department carry out further consultation with residents of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses on a rehousing programme, since the buildings were likely to be made redundant and demolished.

Although the decisions on the demolition had not been finalised, the Housing Department began the process of rehousing the current residents of Cairngorm House. Grampian and Cairngorm Houses began to be vacated by the outgoing tenants as of November 11<sup>th</sup> 1990. By late 1991, the tower blocks became mostly unoccupied. On November 13<sup>th</sup> 1991, thieves broke into one of the vacant flats in Cairngorm House in an attempt to steal bathroom and kitchen fittings. The thieves damaged the pipeline and caused flooding in which 28 households were affected.<sup>1</sup> Most of the residents whose houses were affected accepted permanent transfer to other council houses. The rest of the residents of the tower blocks were gradually relocated to other area. It was during the period of housing reallocation that residents and buildings were most vulnerable to vandalism and crime.

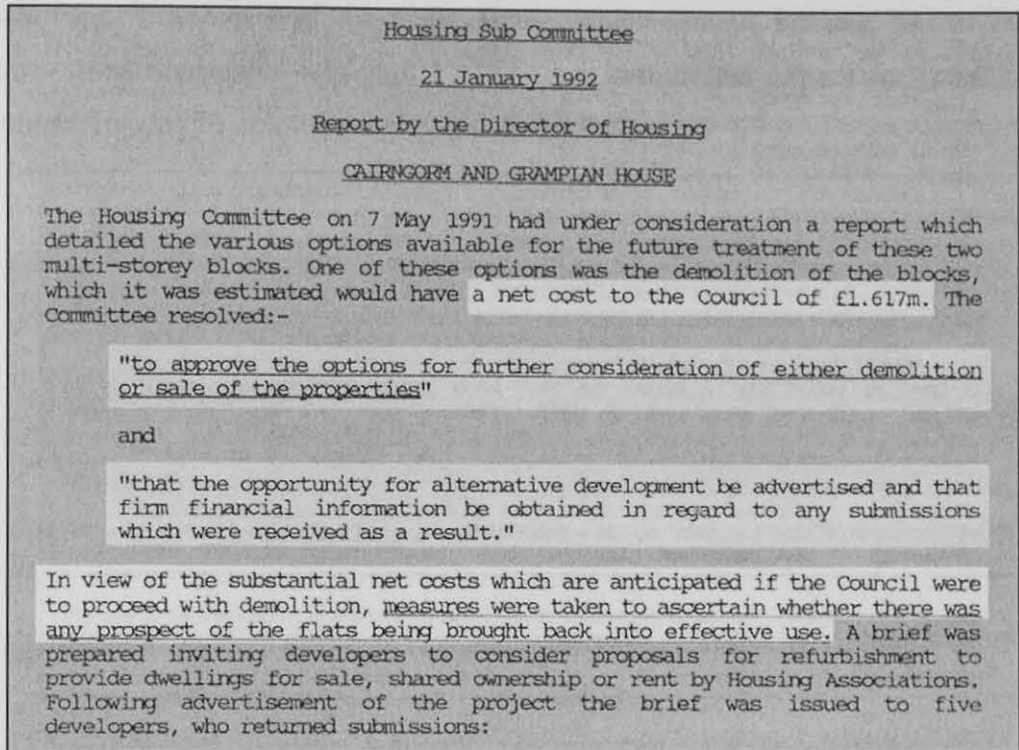


**Figure 5. 12** Residents suffered from the initial decision to demolish the tower blocks [5-12]

<sup>1</sup> Report by Director of Housing, 1991, Cairngorm House Flooding: Tenants' delegation, 3 December 1991



In 1992, the Housing Committee gathered further information on all the available options. At this stage the full refurbishment programme seems to have been discarded. The Housing Committee approved the option of demolishing and selling the property, and resolved that its alternative redevelopment was to be advertised. The details are shown in figure 5. 13.



**Figure 5. 13** Report on approval of the demolition and disposal of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses, by Director of Housing on 21 January 1992 [5-13]

The above figure shows that the estimated total cost of demolition was £1.6 million, which the Housing Committee considered to be a substantial amount of budget. If the decision to demolish Grampian and Cairngorm houses was to be made, all possible alternative options which may have brought the tower blocks back into effective use have to be thoroughly scrutinised. As seen in the figure, there were five developers submitting proposals for redevelopment of the tower blocks and their site. A company proposed the demolition and comprehensive redevelopment of the site which was discouraged. Three companies proposed the refurbishment of the tower blocks for low-income housing which required deficit funding. The Housing Committee concluded that the economic viability of these proposals was to be considered in consultation with

Scottish Homes. The fifth proposal, from Muirfield Glen Ltd., was to refurbish the tower blocks as student accommodation.

In the same report dated January 21<sup>st</sup> 1991, Scottish Homes confirmed that it would not be interested in funding any refurbishment project for the tower blocks. Thereby three proposals for refurbishment of the tower blocks as low-income housing had to be dismissed. Scottish Homes was probably the most resourceful agency for housing development, making its opinion a highly influential factor.

In the briefing instructions, developers were requested to ascertain the availability of financial assistance from Scottish Homes. The submissions from Lodgeday, Norwest Holst and Cruden Homes all rely on substantial levels of deficit funding. Discussions have therefore taken place with Scottish Homes and copies of the submissions were made available.

Confirmation has now been received of Scottish Homes reservations in respect of deficit funding for refurbishment. They do not have confidence in the market for owner-occupation in this type of provision and location, and have serious doubts as to whether rehabilitation of the blocks is a value for money proposition.

Since deficit funding for refurbishment of blocks is unlikely to be forthcoming from Scottish Homes, the proposals as submitted by Lodgeday, Norwest Holst and Cruden Homes are unlikely to be viable.

**Figure 5. 14** Viewpoint given by Scottish Homes indicating financial unviability as a reason that proposals for refurbishments of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were rejected [5-14]

Muirfield Glen Ltd have proposed a scheme which does not involve deficit funding from Scottish Homes but is funded through Business Expansion Scheme arrangements. This is a two stage proposal whereby the flats are initially used (8 years) for student letting, and thereafter are offered for sale with the District Council participating in a profit sharing scheme. Because of the novelty of this scheme further detailed appraisal will be required of the financial arrangements.

The proposal by Muirfield Glen Ltd does not rely on subsidy from Scottish Homes, but may be worthy of further consideration upon clarification of the proposed funding arrangements. It would be prudent however to investigate further options for redevelopment rather than refurbishment.

**Figure 5. 15** Report by Director of Housing dated 21 January 1991, showing that without funding from Scottish homes, the economic viability of the proposal became questionable [5-15]

Also in the report shown in Figure 5.15, the proposal of Muirfield Glen Ltd. to reuse the tower blocks as student accommodation was, in principle, the only viable option because it did not require deficit funding from Scottish Homes. Nevertheless, the Housing Committee was highly concerned with the feasibility of this scheme and inclined to consider the other available option, namely, demolition and new-build. Scottish Homes recommended that the demolition of the tower blocks and new-build would be a positive factor generating more attractive investment opportunities. Also considered that demolition of Leith Fort low-rise housing would provide a '*suitable land package*' for housing redevelopment. The reason given for demolition of the adjacent low-rise housing was that the site of the tower blocks would probably be devalued by the image of the low-rise housing. Figure 5.16 demonstrates that finance was a dominant issue when considering the future of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses from the viewpoint of Scottish Homes.

Scottish Homes have also indicated their view that demolition and new-build would represent better value for money, but that it may be necessary to include the adjacent low-rise housing in order to assemble a suitable land package, and so avoid negative valuation in respect of the multi-storeys site.

**Figure 5. 16** Scottish Homes standpoint which against the continuation of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses; Report by Director of Housing dated 21 January 1991 [5-16]

The Housing Committee undertook further consultation with residents of Leith Fort on

## Fears over fate of homes

Evening News 9 March 1992

RESIDENTS of Leith's Fort housing estate fear their homes will be demolished to make way for developers.

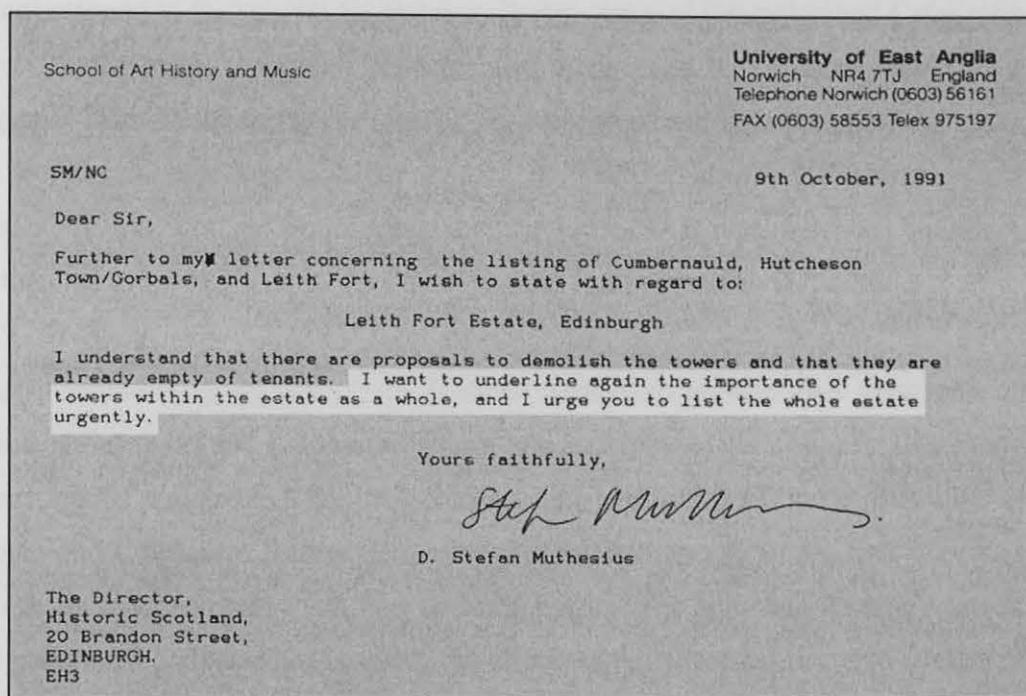
Edinburgh District Council want to tear down the estate's notorious high-rise flats — but people in nearby Hamilton and Cannon Wynd suspect the same fate awaits them.

the proposal to demolish the low-rise housing. News of the demolition had disturbed the residents and their community in Leith Fort. Figure 5.17 shows that the residents would be strongly discontented if their homes were demolished and they were relocated to new areas. The residents expressed their disagreement with Scottish Homes' recommendation and informed the Housing Committee about their intention to remain in the area.

**Figure 5. 17** Rumour of demolition disturbed the residents of the low-rise housing in Leith Fort [5-17]

Finally, the committee resolved that demolition of 48 low-rise houses in Hamilton Wynd and Cannon Wynd would be abandoned and consideration on redevelopment of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses would focus on the remaining proposals which were 1) demolition and 2) the refurbishment proposal by Muirfield Glen Ltd.

In October, Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland (AHSS) requested Historic Scotland to list Grampian and Cairngorm Houses because of the buildings' cultural and architectural values. Dr. Stefan Muthesius sent a letter to David Walker, Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings, Historic Scotland, expressing his opinion for conservation of the tower blocks.



**Figure 5. 18** A letter dated 9 October 1991, from Dr. Stefan Muthesius to the Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings, Historic Scotland requesting the statutory listing of Leith Fort Housing estate [5-18]

If Leith Fort housing estate was listed as a group of buildings of architectural merit, theoretically Grampian and Cairngorm Houses could have been listed as category-A listed buildings. As a result, the listed tower blocks would have had legal protection and the decision to demolish would have to be reconsidered, unless the Housing

Committee could prove that all possible measures for conservation of the tower blocks had been exhausted. In its attempts to conserve the tower blocks, the pressure group sent multiple requests to the Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings, Historic Scotland, in order to press its case for withdrawn the decision to demolish. There had been no reply from Historic Scotland. On January 1992, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland resent another letter to Historic Scotland requesting the listing of the tower blocks. On this occasion, the Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings, replied to both Dr. Stefan Muthesius and the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. The letter to Dr Muthesius is shown in Figure 5.19 (see overleaf). The Chief Inspector explained that Historic Scotland lacked the financial capacity to support refurbishment. Therefore it could not respond to the request for statutory listing status of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses. Furthermore, the Chief Inspector also commented that nothing would have been gained from listing the tower blocks. He considered that spot-listing of the tower blocks would have resulted in the loss of '*local authority goodwill*'. If funding became available, Historic Scotland would spend it to support other groups of special buildings, rather than the tower blocks that were an unpopular form of residential building.

The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland decided to publish their viewpoint on the value of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses and anticipated public support that would have assisted the protection of the tower blocks. The publication of 'the conservation of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses' provoked furious criticism from the Fort Forum, a local resident association in Leith Fort Housing Estate. The argument became a public debate in national and local newspapers. An officer of Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland was publicly condemned as a blockhead for trying to preserve the tower blocks. Nanette Donaldson, a tenant since the tower blocks were opened and the leader of the resident association, said:

"Hogwash. They are superb example of a living nightmare. Perhaps Miss Crawford would like to do a swap. Only 20 of 152 flats are still occupied. The other tenants have been moved out. Some have been moved to other run down estates but they are delighted – because they are out of here! I know nothing about architecture but a blind man could see these blocks are an eyesore. The sooner they're razed to the ground, the better." (Sunday Mail (Edinburgh) 16 February 1992 reported by John Finlayson)



# HISTORIC SCOTLAND

20 Brandon Street Edinburgh EH3 5RA  
Telephone 031-244 2971 Fax 031-244 3187

DAVID M. WALKER DA FSAScot HFRAS LLD  
Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings

Dr Stefan Muthesius  
School of Art History and Music  
University of East Anglia  
NORWICH  
NR4 7TJ

4 February 1992

Dear Stefan

## LEITH FORT, EDINBURGH

Good to hear from you again; it is too long since last we met.

I am fully in agreement that the recent past has to be taken seriously and indeed read a paper on the subject at Europa Nostra's Heidelberg conference in September 1988. I presume that the material you previously sent is the paper Miles Horsey sent us in 1989 with photocopies of articles from the Architectural Review.

There are in Scotland quite a number of schemes of this type in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and even small places like Kincardine-on-Forth. None is popular as housing and in every case there are acute problems of keeping them tenanted and in repair. At Leith Fort the Housing Committee has decided to withdraw its tenants and attempts to secure private interest have failed. Any interest has been on the basis of retaining the remains of the 18th century fort and just possibly also one Shaw Stewart block, Fort House. Rehabilitation costs for the two point blocks alone are currently between £6m and £8m and even if that money could be found, finding tenants would still be a problem. Edinburgh District Council is not prepared to put any further money in it and is only interested in maximum site value to recover some of the outstanding debt as the development is only halfway through its loan charge period. Scottish Homes has refused to consider funding any rehabilitation there and at the moment we are unable to finance the restoration of several buildings of United Kingdom rather than Scottish interest which would have fairly universal support and there is simply no prospect of being able to make any contribution to the restoration of Leith Fort, or, frankly, of securing Ministerial approval for the sums likely to be involved even if we had. Even if we could have contributed, without the involvement of Scottish Homes, nothing could be achieved anyway. Against that background there is nothing to be gained, and only local authority goodwill to be lost by spot-listing the Leith Fort complex.

On a more positive note, as part of our thematic survey programme, we will be looking at all the better housing developments of this vintage in a systematic way with a view to what should be listed. If by some miracle Leith Fort survives, its listing will be easier to present in the context of a reasoned paper setting out the historic significance and relative importance of the examples considered.

Figure 5. 19 A letter dated 4 February 1992, from the Director of Historic Scotland to Dr. Stefan Muthesius explaining reasons for declining the statutory listing of Leith Fort housing estate [5-19]





**Figure 5. 20** the group of conservationists was condemned by the resident group [5.20]

Mrs. Donaldson's expression is an example of the generally negative public opinions towards Grampian and Cairngorm Houses. Such an opinion was held particularly by former residents. The public debate continued until the final letter concerning the issue from Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland was published in the Scotsman on 25 February 1992. Since there was

no support from the public and Historic Scotland, the Architectural Heritage Society considered that it further debate would be futile. Emma Crawford, a development officer, with Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, wrote at the end of her letter:

"...The society is pleased with the demonstrable interest in the architecture raised by this particular case, and hopes that the built environment will continue to attract this level of critical appraisal, and that proposals and plans for new buildings will likewise be examined carefully to ensure the highest quality built environment for the future." (The Scotsman (Edinburgh) 25 February 1992)

The decision to demolish Grampian and Cairngorm Houses had been postponed since 1991 because no funding for the demolition had yet become available. Meantime, the Housing Committee was focusing on the feasibility of the proposal of Muirfield Glen Ltd., which required approval regarding financial viability. In September 1993, Leith Forum sent a letter to the Housing Committee in regard to the demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses. This was the second letter reaffirming the Leith Fort residents' viewpoint which fully supported the decision to demolish the tower blocks. The residents considered that demolition was the most cost-effective decision. They asked the Housing Committee to approach the Scottish Office for funding of the demolition, so as to accelerate the decision making. Concerned with the time scale of the decision-making, the residents also emphasised that the final decision needed to be made as soon as possible because the tower blocks had become a rubbish dumping ground, which caused health hazard and great inconvenience to nearby residents. Figure 5.21 shows content of the report by Fort Local Forum dated September 14<sup>th</sup> 1993.

**Figure 5. 21** A Report concerning the Fort Local Forum's letter, dated 14 September 1993 [5-21]

### Report

- 3.1 At its meeting on 6 September 1993, Fort Local Forum was advised of the Housing Committee's decision of 17 August 1993 to note the Forum's view that Cairngorm and Grampian Houses should be demolished and that the Scottish Office be approached for funding to cover the demolition costs, pending a detailed report on the future of the blocks to be submitted to the Committee during September/October 1993.
- 3.2 Having heard a member of the Housing Department on the current position regarding the proposal by Muirfield Glen Limited to develop the block, the Forum agreed:-
- once again to express the view that the two blocks should be demolished;
  - to express concern at the length of time taken by the Council to reach a decision on the future of the blocks and that it currently looked as though the matter could "drag on" for further considerable time;
  - to request that, because of the dumping of rubbish on the site causing fire and health hazards and great inconvenience to nearby residents, interim measures be taken to improve security around the blocks, such as:
    - a high 'concreted in' fence, say 15 feet, surrounding the blocks; and/or
    - a locked gate with access for garage users; and
  - that a further report from the Director of Housing on the matter be presented to the next meeting of the Forum.

In 1994, the Housing Committee received from Muirfield Glen Ltd. an alternative proposal which aimed to reuse the tower blocks as a hotel complex. The company planned to carry out substantial refurbishment of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses for subsequent conversion into a 250-room hotel. The hotel would be franchised from and managed by Choice Hotel International. The Committee agreed to pursue the proposal for hotel use which would be viable both economically and socially. The proposal

would generate jobs in the local area. It was generally agreed that positive use of the tower blocks would be a better way forward instead of having to spend £1 million for the demolition.

## Hotel plan for 'Terror Towers'

Evening News 10 September 1994

A US businessman wants to turn Leith's notorious "Terror Towers" into a three-star hotel.

The 22-storey Cairngorm and Grampian Houses have been standing empty for almost three years and were due to be demolished at a cost of nearly £1 million.

But now US-born Charlie Maas, whose Muirfield Glen company is based in East Lothian, wants to take over the buildings and convert them into a 250-bedroom hotel complex.

The two blocks have been plagued by fire-raisers, vandals and thieves who caused floods by stealing plumbing.

An earlier plan by Mr Maas to turn the buildings into student residences collapsed after Government housing

by Ian Swanson

NEWS REPORTER

agency Scottish Homes said the scheme was not viable and refused funding.

The plan had included a 24-hour security system, swimming pool and student cafe.

The £10 million hotel development would transform the blocks both outside and in, with several large suites on the top floors, standard bedrooms below and shops on the ground floor.

The complex would be managed by Choice Hotels International.

Edinburgh's housing committee will be asked on Tuesday to defer plans to knock down the flats to allow negotiations on the hotel plan to be concluded.

Housing convener Mary Mulligan

said: "This is looking more hopeful than anything we have had before."

Muirfield Glen would probably pay only a nominal sum to acquire the property.

Councillor Mulligan said: "We are not so much interested in that as in making a positive use of the blocks and not having to pay nearly £1 million to knock them down."

"A hotel in Leith would be good for the surrounding area and could offer jobs to people locally."

But she said it was important the deal was agreed quickly.

She added: "Local people have put up with a lot while the flats have been empty."

"Because we have let them stand for so long we are putting a six-month time limit on it. If an agreement cannot be concluded by then we will call in the demolition people."

**Figure 5. 22** Evening News 10 September 1994 on the hotel redevelopment plan for Grampian and Cairngorm Houses [5-22]

At the same time, the Housing Committee had also accepted the lowest tender submitted by W J and D (Contracting) Limited at a total cost of £944,000 for the demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses prior to the expiry date of 12 February 1995. The Housing Committee had to decide whether to proceed with the refurbishment of the tower blocks because it appeared that they would have to deal with the additional cost of securing the demolition tender. However, there was still no financial provision available for demolition in the Housing Plan Annual Policy Statement 1995-1999. If the demolition were to proceed, additional finance would have to be sought. If the committee was to decide to proceed with the refurbishment proposal, it had to be a condition that Muirfield Glen Ltd. could provide a performance bond of £500,000. The bond was required to ensure that if the hotel proposal was unsuccessful, the City Council would not have to risk an increasing cost of demolishing the tower blocks. Finally, Muirfield Glen Ltd failed to meet the financial condition and the Housing Committee decided to demolish Grampian and Cairngorm Houses. The demolition actually began in November 1997

#### **5.4. The reasons involved in the decision-making**

##### ***5.4.1. Structural integrity***

The structural integrity of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was the first information which Edinburgh Housing Committee sought out. In 1986, the Housing Department assigned Ove Arup & Partners Scotland to carry out an investigation into structural condition of the tower blocks. The investigation revealed that the skeleton structure of the buildings was in satisfactory condition. The problems were concentrated on external panels and their fixings. The investigation revealed that the external panels suffered from concrete corrosion and failures of cladding panel fixings. Firstly, the manganese-bronze bolt which held the external panel had strength failure. The bolts suffered from corrosion stress as well as being under the stress caused by misalignments of the external panels. According to the final report by Ove Arup & Partners Scotland<sup>1</sup>, manganese-bronze loses its strength, if it is in an atmosphere that is moist, containing

---

<sup>1</sup> Ove Arup & Partners Scotland, "Test on fixings and concrete Cairngorm and Grampian Houses" (Edinburgh, Housing Department, 1986, photocopied)



### 5.4.2. *Financial and Economic factors*

As seen, the Housing Committee of Edinburgh City Council had a limited financial capacity for dealing with the problems of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses. According to its priority objective, the Housing Committee aimed to uproot all the problems related to Grampian and Cairngorm Houses, and so the decision to demolish the tower blocks was a preferential option. The Housing Committee stated clearly that it had no intention to continue any further investment in the tower blocks because it was considered to be a waste of public funds. Despite such a clearly stated objective, the Housing Committee did not make the actual decision to demolish the tower blocks in 1992 and not even in 1995, because there was no funding available. The City Council's decisions on the future of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses depended upon financial availability in the Housing Plan Annual Policy Statement or other sources of finance. Figure 5. 27 shows that it was probably not until 1996 that funding for demolition would be available. The decision-making process was not straightforward because of the intricate process of obtaining the demolition cost of £1.6 million. Viewed in this way, the option of repairing the tower blocks was dismissed without further discussion due mainly to the cost of the repairs which was beyond the financial capacity of the Housing Committee.

**6.1.2 No specific provision is contained within the Council Approved 1994/95 or 1995/96 HRA Capital Programme. If the demolition option is chosen, to achieve the required expenditure, will involve altering the current 1994/95 HRA Capital Programme and the 1995/96 HRA Capital Programme as stated in the Housing Plan. This will obviously delay the priorities at present.**

Report dated 13 September 1994 by the Executive Director of Housing: Cairngorm and Grampian Houses

**Figure 5. 24** A report indicated that there was no funding for the demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses available before 1995/1996. Housing Rehabilitation Area (HRA) programme. [5-24]

A solution to financial capacity is private sector investment. There was a proposal for reuse of the tower blocks as hotel. The Housing Committee, under a consultation with Financial and Economic Development, realised that the refurbishment for hotel use would generate a positive socioeconomic impact within the Leith area. The reuse would also help the City Council saving the demolition cost. Nevertheless, it would appear that the Housing Committee did not give priority to maximise the use of the tower

blocks. The case study suggests that the Housing Committee decided to pursue the refurbishment options because it had not yet obtained funding for demolition and also partially because political obligation to pursue this possible solutions proposed at the beginning of the decision-making process.

#### 5.4.3. *Management policy and Functional Performance of Buildings*

According to the Housing Committee of the Edinburgh City Council, the initial decision on the problems of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was to cease all investments in these two tower blocks.<sup>1</sup> A reason given for the decision was the low efficiency in functional performance of the buildings. The functional performance efficiency was a measurement of the tower blocks' performance under an environment conditioned by the Edinburgh Housing Management Policy. Regarding the expectation of the Housing Committee on the performance of its housing, Grampian and Cairngorm Houses had been substandard; for example, poor acoustic and heat insulations, water penetration during heavy rain, social problems and vandalism. Although it seemed logical to cease using the buildings because of performance inefficiency, these problems were the result of both the inferior quality of the buildings and ineffectual management policy of the Housing Committee. The following discussion will examine the extent to which the

Housing Committee justified its decision with the performance inefficiency.

Other grievances raised included late-night noise from people leaving the community centre by a door on to the tower block's piazza; banging doors caused by wind inside the building; hall and stair windows which children easily opened; tenants' lack of instructions on how to work central heating; car parking; derelict property nearby; waste ground; and unsafe hoardings.

Evening News 25 September 1969  
'Don't let our homes turn to slums'

**Figure 5. 25** List of complaints on living in Grampian&Cairngorm House [5-25]

The functional performances of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were affected by their intrinsic faults such as flawed construction details and defective design features. Due to the fact that Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were the first twin tower blocks in Scotland, such problems were likely to occur. The efficient performance of the tower blocks also depended on an advanced building system, for examples, lifts, plumbing and electricity systems and central waste disposal. The building contractors and architects were

<sup>1</sup> the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1990



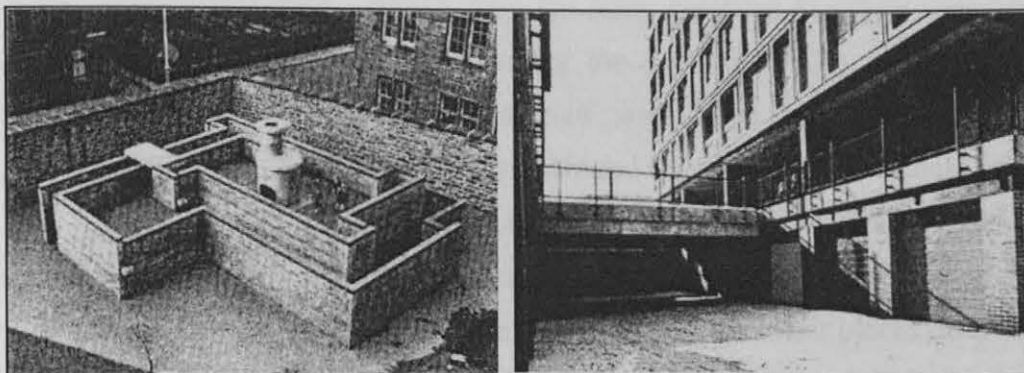
inexperienced in many areas of construction problems. It was likely that defective construction details had occurred during the construction period and many problems became known only after the tower blocks were in full operation. One example is lighting in the hallway of the bed sitting room for pensioners. It was reported that the pensioners had inconvenient access because the hallway was very narrow and had little daylight without electric lighting. When electricity failure occurred, the disruption was, reportedly, rather unbearable. The tower blocks also had problems with severe condensation because the ventilation system was inadequate for a concrete building in Scottish weather. There were often reports of the breakdowns of lift and other facilities caused by overuse as well as by misuse (See 5.2.4). These problems persisted and caused considerable anxiety to the residents.

Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were always known as one of the most deprived housing estates in Edinburgh. The tower blocks always suffered from social problems, petty crime and vandalism. It was believed that defective design features of the tower blocks contributed greatly to such antisocial behaviour, the loss of sense of community, drug abuse, crime, and litter. The problems with building designs and crimes were detailed in a research carried out by Oscar Newman (*Defensible Space*, 1972) in, repeated as a UK wide study over a decade later by Alice Coleman (*Utopia on Trial*, 1985) (See chapter 1). The research evidence demonstrated that if a place lacks natural surveillance by the residents and a clear sense of 'territory', such a place is prone to crime and vandalism. According to the explanation, Grampian and Cairngorm Houses suffered severely from vandalism because in many areas of the buildings there was no surveillance by caretakers or residents. For example, anyone could gain access to the service rooms on the ground floor directly from the street. Caretakers, whose office was in the lobby hall on the first floor, were unable to provide surveillance for that area. As a result, the garages and service rooms on the ground floor were often vandalised. The lift machine room was set on fire many times. Thieves stole plumbing fixtures from a vacant flat and the resulting damage caused floods in the buildings.<sup>1</sup> There were evidence that the staircase were used by drug addicts and some people having sex on the

---

<sup>1</sup> Report by Director of Housing, Cairngorm House Flooding: Tenant's delegation, 3 December 1991,

staircase.<sup>1</sup> There was also a lack of surveillance in the toddler's play area. Young children were often bullied or trapped inside by older children.<sup>2</sup> Similar explanations can be applied to damages occurring to the lift machine room and other vandal-prone areas



**Figure 5. 26** The toddler's play area with a high wall was turned to an area for bullies (left), Entrance to garage and service room on the ground floor (right) [5-26]

On the other hand, housing mismanagement could also have been a key factor contributing greatly to substandard performance of the high-rise housing. Although the City Council concluded that the defective design of the tower blocks was a key factor leading to their demolition, residents and the pressure group for conservation of the tower blocks dismissed this conclusion. Miles Glendinning, a representative of DoCoMoMo, argued that management problems were a result of the incompetence of the Housing Committee. He believed that Grampian and Cairngorm Houses could be decent housing provided that adequate management was arranged, and therefore, the Housing Committee should not be allowed to spend another £1.6 million of public money to demolish 152 houses and resulted in empty site. This view was shared by residents of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses. The residents argued that *"It's not the design that's the problem. Safety-wise the towers are very well designed; the real problem has been the Council, which is now threatening to demolish them."*<sup>3</sup> There was a lack of routine maintenance on the buildings. For example, 70 families, who lived in

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 7 March 1992

<sup>2</sup> The Scotsman (Edinburgh) 10 July 1965

<sup>3</sup> The Scotsman (Edinburgh), 25 February 1992

Grampian House, had to share eight domestic washing machines. No immediate repair was carried out, which resulted in serious damage to the building material. As Charles Maas of Muirfield Glen Ltd commented "*These high-rises don't work anywhere in the*

Extract from:  
Miles Glendinning, Scotsman  
25 February 1992 Points of View P, 10

But this turns on its head the real issue: whether a municipal authority, having itself run down expensive public assets, should then be allowed to spend another £1.6 million of the people's money just to destroy 200 houses and produce an empty site!

Edinburgh District Council's housing chairman, Councillor J Burnett, tells us blandly (Points of View, today) that "management problems" made Leith Fort "difficult to let" and left it in need of repairs. The council, having impartially monitored their performance, could then pronounce them a failure.

For the first 20 years, the blocks were properly managed, and well looked after by their tenants. By 1982, caretaking had become intermittent, and, as a result, vandalism (from outside) started. By 1988, a vicious circle was set: a new, lax letting policy, mushrooming vandalism (from within), dependency and departure of the older tenants.

**Figure 5. 27** A criticism on the decision on demolition of the tower blocks [5-27]

*world when they're run by the public sector. These officials have too many functions to satisfy over and above managing the building.*"<sup>1</sup> As a result, the washing machines were often inoperative due to overuse. Grampian and Cairngorm Houses would have been a decent housing if the City Council had a effective management policy. Viewed in this way, the performance inefficiency of the tower blocks does not give sufficient reason to cease the use of the buildings.

The evidence in this case study suggests that it is more likely that both inferior quality and mismanagement contributed to the performance inefficiency. Nonetheless, the performance inefficiency of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was a valid reason to cease their use because the Housing Committee considered that financial requirements of the tower blocks, in the future, could not be managed by the

budget given by Housing Management Policy. The delays in repair and maintenance were usually a result of limited resources including funding, staff, and technical knowledge. Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were programmed for low-income people for whom low rent was set. Consequently, the maintenance budget which came directly from the rent was not enough to cope with the requirements of the tower blocks. Councillor Jimmy Burnett commented on the budget that "*Our housing plan demonstrates a need for the investment of £450 million and the capital programme is only in the region of £30 million.*"<sup>2</sup> Although this may appear exaggerated, a large proportion of social housings in Edinburgh did require enormous amounts of funding in

<sup>1</sup> The Scotsman (Edinburgh) 19 September 1994

<sup>2</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 30 May 1989

order to provide adequate functional performance. In the past, the Housing Committee had learnt that the high-rise housing tended to cause extra problems than other types of housing. To conclude, the decision to cease all investment in the tower blocks was justified with regard to the long-term goals of financial considerations and housing management.

#### 5.4.4. *Social value*

Social value represents the residents' desire to live in and sustain a housing estate. This is a key factor influencing decisions about the future of social housing. While Scottish Homes justified options of decision from economic and financial viewpoints, the Housing Committee considered social value to be as important as economic viability. In terms of investment, Scottish Homes proposed that the demolition plan should include 48 houses in Hamilton Wynd and Cannon Wynd so as to create an attractive land package for new housing development. If the Housing Committee had proceeded with Scottish Homes' proposal, the demolition of the tower blocks would have been achieved in a shorter period, because Scottish Homes would be able to provide funding for the demolition. Housing development in Leith Fort would have been carried out with firm financial viability.

##### SUMMARY

It is apparent that Scottish Homes are not favourably disposed towards refurbishment of the properties and would prefer to direct their funding resources towards a solution which involved demolition of the blocks and redevelopment of the site, including additional land to provide new housing. Such a proposal would have considerable implications for the 48 properties at Hamilton Wynd and Cannon Wynd, and it would firstly be necessary to undertake full tenant consultation, if the Committee was minded to extend the potential development site.

**Figure 5. 28** Report dated 21 January 1992, by the Director of Housing summarises Scottish Homes' recommendation on the demolition of Low-rise housing of Leith Fort [5-28]

However, the consultation with resident of Leith Fort resulted in strong disagreement on the demolition of low-rise housing in Hamilton and Cannon Wynd. Residents of Leith Fort had demonstrated that they wanted to remain living in the low-rise housing, in which a strong sense of community had been established. The residents desire to live in

the area may be described as the social bond which forms between the people and the place. Demolition of the low-rise would have destroyed the social value and subsequently the community. Residents would have to be reallocated to other social housing and that would affect their life. Therefore, it would appear that the Housing Committee considered that the comprehensive redevelopment of Leith Fort Housing was socially unjustified.

#### 5.4.5. *Change of Appearance*

Social image and public opinion both had an impact on decisions on the future of the tower blocks. In the past, most of the residents had always objected to the appearance

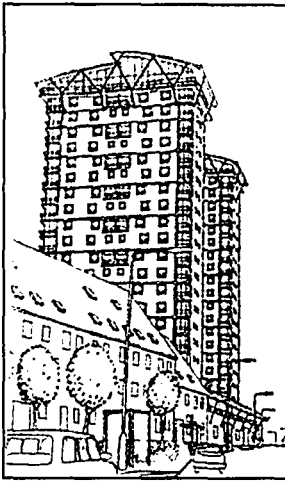


Figure 5. 29 proposed appearance of the tower blocks [5-29]

of the tower blocks. Many described them as 'prison-like' buildings. On the contrary, the majority of the residents of the low and medium-rise houses were content with the appearance of their houses. The low-rise houses were partially built with stone and timber. The choice of paving material, setts and cobbles, assisted in creating a romantic quality which seemed to be easier to appreciate than the strictly technological aesthetic of the high-rise.<sup>1</sup> Councillor Derick Wilson, representative of the Leith area, expressed his opinion on the tower blocks "*They were unpopular with the people who live there and I cannot see them becoming popular with anyone else*"<sup>2</sup> Such opinions are not only held by the local politicians and the residents but also by the local authority, the public and architects generally.

In practice, the appearance of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was of prime concern if the tower blocks were to be reused. There was concern that the original 'exposed precast concrete panels' of the tower blocks would discourage prospective residents, who already appeared to be diminishing in number. In 1994, the Executive Director of Finance and Economic Development also considered that changes in the appearance of

<sup>1</sup> The Scotsman (Edinburgh) 10 July 1965

<sup>2</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 25 September, 1992

the tower blocks' were one of the advantages that could be gained from the refurbishment programme.

3.4 Based on the above it is considered that the hotel option contained within the Muirfield Glen Limited proposals has distinct advantages.

- (i) The physical appearance of the blocks will be significantly improved and enhanced.
- (ii) The potential employment generated by such a proposal.
- (iii) In recognition of the TMS Consultants report on "Exploiting the Potential of Day Trip and Short Term Break Tourism in Edinburgh January 1993" and advice received from the Executive Director of Economic Development and Estates, there is a considerable market for this type of development in Edinburgh.

FG/PMCAGRCR/SD  
5 September 1994


Figure 5. 30 Report dated 13 September 1994 by the Executive Director of Housing, indicating an opinion in favour of change of appearance of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses. [5-30]

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
1 COCKBURN STREET, EDINBURGH, EH1 1BJ  
TELEPHONE 031-225 2424, TELEX 727143, FAX 031-220 6626

Hunt Thompson Associates  
79 Parkway  
LONDON  
NW1 7PP

For attention of Cherie Yeo

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH DISTRICT COUNCIL



EDINBURGH

IMPROVING SERVICES - CREATING JOBS

21 April 1993

IS/MP/AF

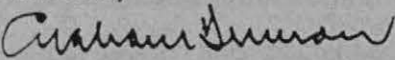
Dear Sirs

CAIRNGORM AND GRAMPIAN HOUSE, LEITH FORT, EDINBURGH

In response to your request I confirm my support for the principle of refurbishment of the residential tower blocks, Cairngorm House and Grampian House. As long as you do not increase the number of residential units you will not require planning consent for the re-use of the buildings. You will however require consent in respect of a material change to the appearance of the blocks. It will also be necessary to have legally confirmed that residents will enjoy permanent rights to use the car parking spaces that were previously available to the local authority tenants of the houses.

I understand you are aware of the architectural history of these buildings and that they remain the subject of some interest. In their current condition though they are an eyesore and their re-use in an unaltered state is problematic. A change in their appearance therefore is to be expected. I commend your work so far in this respect and I see it as an acceptable basis for proceeding. Design development however will have to be responsive to public comment and my further consideration in depth. I look forward to the project continuing.

Yours faithfully



Director

Figure 5. 31 A letter dated 21 April 1993 from Director of Planning to Muirfield Glen suggesting that change of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was to be expected [5-31]



There was a letter from the director of the Planning Department to Charles Maas, of Muirfield Glen Ltd, which suggested that the change in appearance was a key factor, should the hotel proposal be granted. He said "*In their current condition though they are an eyesore and their re-use in an unaltered state is problematic. A change in their appearance therefore is to be expected. I commend your work so far in this respect and I see it as an acceptable basis for proceeding*". Figure 5.31 shows the full content of the letter. The local authority believed that changes in the appearance would contribute to the successful refurbishment of the tower blocks, regardless of the new functional requirement

#### 5.4.6. *Negative Image*

The image of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses had long been negative in the public perception. The negative image stemmed from the magnitude of problems of this award winning development regardless of actual causes of the problems. An article in the Evening News, dated March 7<sup>th</sup> 1992, carried selective opinions of the residents and the City Council, the owner (See figure 5.32). Councillor Cardownie, a local politician of the Leith area, regarded the tower blocks as 'two monstrosities', 'a blight on Leith' and commented that nobody wanted to live in these buildings. Newspapers often emphasised social problems of the tower blocks, which to a large extent contributed to the negative image and led to public rejection. From the local authority viewpoint, the Housing Committee and Housing Department had experienced problems in management of the tower blocks, with which they did not want further involvement.

The hostile perception of the buildings was also extended to the pressure group who tried to conserve them. The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland was strongly criticised for attempting to conserve the tower blocks. Due to the negative image, the existence of the tower blocks was believed to jeopardise future developments which would benefit the economic profile of Leith Fort Housing Estate and the neighbouring area. The tower blocks had discouraged Scottish Homes from investing in and developing the area.

THE GROUP fighting to save two Leith tower blocks from demolition have been branded as "crazy" by the residents.

The Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland say Cairngorm House and Grampian House — built in the Sixties — are "too important and valuable to be destroyed".

The Edinburgh-based society says the blocks should be saved because:

## Flats backers slammed

by PETER LAING

Evening News 7 March 1992

"They are of uncompromisingly sculptural boldness and were significant in unprecedented use of modern materials and techniques."

### Junkies

"They're crazy!" said Catherine McLaren, who has lived in Grampian House for nine years.

"It's terrible — you have junkies on the stairs and people having sex on the stairs. Last year they put in new heating and the bills have gone sky-high."

Doreen McPhillips, a resident for 13 years, said: "The architectural society are nuts. The council ought to put them in there for three or four years and see how they like them then."

Another resident, Brian Wilson, added: "They are just ridiculous and out of

touch. The flats are horrendous inside and outside. They are not fit for human beings."

Edinburgh District Councillor Councillor Steve Cardownie says the blocks must go. "They are ugly — a two-fingered salute to the rest of Edinburgh."

The AHSS are sticking to their guns. "I think they have grandeur and boldness of conception," said Emma Crawford, development officer.

Figure 5. 32 Negative opinions towards the tower blocks, Evening news, 7 March 1992 [5-32]

### 5.4.7. Cultural Value

The debates over the cultural and architectural value of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were however undertaken amongst the people involved with Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. In the actual decision making, the cultural value was considered to be irrelevant. The Housing Committee was not legally obliged to consider cultural value because the tower blocks were not listed buildings. Unless it is in the owner personal interest, if a building does not have a statutory listed status that is being legally protected, the cultural value will, in practice, normally have no impact on decisions on the future of buildings. The following discussion will consider cultural reasons for and against conservation of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses.

To begin with, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland appraised the tower blocks thus:

"The 21 storey blocks were the tallest buildings under construction in Scotland in 1960, are of uncompromisingly sculptural boldness and were significant in their unprecedented use of modern materials and techniques. (Emma Crawford, the Scotsman, 12, February, 1992)

According to the principle of listing, principle-1.7c states that a building may be listed if it was of "technological innovation or virtuosity, e.g. cast or wrought-iron,

*prefabrication, early use of concrete.*"<sup>1</sup> Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were the modern buildings with innovative technology. Therefore the tower blocks could have been listed for its use of precast concrete panels.

Secondly, the tower blocks represented an important period of the social history of housing reform in Scotland. Their designed follow directly Le Corbusier visionary of modern urban development<sup>2</sup> as well as being aware of sociological science of habitat.<sup>3</sup> Le Corbusier saw high density as a prerequisite for mechanised mass-production. His idea of high density was "*to decongest the centre of cities, increase mobility and increase amount of parks and open space*"<sup>4</sup>, and his solution was high-rise buildings. Le Corbusier proposed high-rise block to accommodate not only houses but also the facility required for modern living such as school, shops, services and employment. The principle-1.7b stated that a building may be listed if it was of "*the special particular building types either for architectural or planning reasons or as illustrating social and economic history.*" According to DoCoMoMo Scottish National Group the Leith Fort was praised as "*an extraordinary and unrivalled microcosm of all the UK's most advance housing design tendencies of the year around 1960.*"<sup>5</sup> Leith Fort was the first of its kind and marked a changing point in the history of Scotland's modern housing. The existence of the tower blocks was contributed significantly to the history of social housing development in Scotland. Dr. Stefan Muthesius wrote a letter to Historic Scotland describing the significance of the tower blocks as;

a) Significance...

maybe not realised that this scheme is not just of Scottish but UK-wide and even international significance. On my experience in England as Vixoc lobbyist, I can state that in this country it would merit Grade 1 status-equal e.g. to the Royal Festival Hall....-thus, in Scotland, presumably Category A...?

Stress...as architecture not for social/historical reasons...(Letter of Stefan Muthesius, October 1991)

---

<sup>1</sup> Historic Scotland, Memorandum of guidance on listed buildings and conservation areas (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1998)

<sup>2</sup> The Scotsman (Edinburgh) 25 February 1992

<sup>3</sup> Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, *The Tower Blocks*, (Yale University Press, 1994)

<sup>4</sup> David Rudin and Nicolas Falk, *Building the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Home*, (Oxford, Architectural Press, 1999,) 34.

<sup>5</sup> DoCoMoMo Scottish National Group, Report on Leith Fort, January 1992

The society argued for retaining original appearance of the tower blocks because it believed that the original design and materials of the tower blocks were of high historical and architectural merit in terms of the history of the modern movement in architecture in Scotland. Accordingly, the pressure group proposed to Historic Scotland that Leith Fort Housing Estate should have been listed as a Category-A building of architectural importance.

The Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings explained some of the reasons why the proposal for listing Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was rejected, none of which, however, were given from a cultural standpoint. The Chief Inspector refused to designate the tower blocks as listed buildings of special architectural merit because the rehabilitation of the tower blocks was economically unviable due to the lack of support from Scottish Homes. The Chief Inspector claimed that Historic Scotland could not contribute to the rehabilitation of the tower block. He said:

“Even if we could have contributed, without the involvement of Scottish Homes, nothing could be achieved anyway. Against that background there is nothing to be gained and only local authority goodwill to be lost by spot-listing the Leith Fort complex.” (Letter from Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings, Historic Scotland, 4 February 1992) (See details in figure 5.19)

The Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings evaluated Grampian and Cairngorm Houses from a socio-economic viewpoint, focusing on negative image, performance in use and financial viability of the refurbishment. In principle, these criteria were irrelevant to the practice with regard to the protection of the building which has cultural value. According to the Principle of Listing *“no worthwhile building should be lost to our environment unless it is demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that every effort has been exerted by all concerned to find a practical way of keeping it.”* The Chief Inspector of Historic Buildings did not demonstrate that Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were unworthy of statutory listed status. Economic considerations should not be Historic Scotland’s primary criteria, whether or not its conservation policy was committed to the modern architecture.

Historic Scotland may, however, have deliberately denied the buildings’ cultural value due to political pressure. If Historic Scotland had listed Leith Fort, it may have caused

conflict with the City Council, because the listed building control would have given legal protection to the tower block, which the City Council preferred to demolish. Although the listing consent can be cancelled, the process would delay the demolition and resulting in extra cost of securing the buildings. Gavin Stamp, conservationist and senior lecturer at the Glasgow School of Architecture, commented on this conservation case that “...the issue is too politically sensitive and historic Scotland lags behind English Heritage in its commitment to Modern architecture.”<sup>1</sup> Therefore there is no counter-argument given from a cultural standpoint and, to some extent, it would appear that the cultural value of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was politically dismissed.

Reasons against conservation of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were discussed in a letter dated April 1<sup>st</sup> 1992 from Mr. Oliver Barratt, a life member of Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland to Mr. Gordon Steele, chairman of Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. As a life member of the society, Mr Barratt expressed his wish to disassociate himself from the campaign to preserve the Leith Fort tower blocks. He also asked the society to campaign for the demolition of the tower blocks. The debates over the architectural merit of the tower blocks were based on three basic components of architecture given by Vitruvius since the Roman time. Figure 5.32 shows his explanation in details.

Mr Barratt argued that the tower blocks should be demolished because they had failed as architecture on the Vitruvius's criteria of Firmness, Commodity and Delight. Concerning 'Firmness', the tower blocks did not have problem with skeleton structure but had problems with their external panels which were deteriorating severely. According to the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland, the external panels of the tower blocks were the element that had architectural value. The external panels were original historical fabrics that were unable to be preserved. Mr. Barrett explained that on the criterion of commodity, the tower blocks failed to perform as good dwelling. The value of pioneering housing project could not compensate for failures of the tower blocks' performance. John N Boyce presented his argument in the Scotsman, that

---

<sup>1</sup> The Scotsman (Edinburgh) 12, February, 1992

*"Housing architecture must be about designing buildings for people, and not some giant experimental canvas."*<sup>1</sup> Edinburgh City Council should not have built the experiment housing project in such an enormous scale.

Concerning the aesthetic value of tower blocks, from the public viewpoint, the tower blocks were described by the public as *"hideous monstrosities, a blight on Leith which make Alcatraz look like the Taj Mahal"*. A local newspaper referred to a visit to the tower blocks as *'a shock trip to dirt and despair'*. From a viewpoint of an architect, Mr. Barratt said in his letter that

"Of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but I regard the towers as hideous, as well as being visually intrusive in many views of North Leith, to the detriment of the conservation area as a whole, and especially to the setting of North Leith Church...I do not suggest that a building should be conventionally beautiful in order to be regarded as architecturally important, or listable...I would strongly support the society taking an initiative in seeking to persuade Historic Scotland to list some of the few buildings of this unfortunate period...these might include, for example, Edinburgh University Library...and if tower blocks must be included, those at Callender Park, Falkirk. These stand in an attractive parkland setting (as Le Corbusier intended) and have always well managed." (Oliver Barratt, letter to Mr Gordon Steele, 1992)

On various occasions, the society pointed out that its observation on the appreciation of the recent past were often against the protection of buildings of historical importance.

"The society is concerned with architecture of all periods and recognised, as history has repeatedly shown, that the aesthetic of the recent past are the most difficult for any generation to evaluate." (The Scotsman, 25 February 1992)

"Ms Crawford however argues that taste is too short lived to be a central element in the debate over the demolition. Each generation rarely appreciate the immediate past: the Edwardians pulled down Victorian gems and the Victorians despise the Georgian" (The Scotsman 17 June 1992)

The debate over aesthetic and historical value was an issue which was philosophically related to the tower blocks and clear-cut answers may not be found by this generation or in the near future. Nevertheless, during the decision-making process, the negative history of the building had left a strong mark on the public opinion and this was unlikely to change in the near future. The tower blocks were perceived purely as troublesome buildings for which demolition was the most preferential solution. In the

---

<sup>1</sup> Scotsman (Edinburgh), 25 February 1992





## 5.5. Summary and Conclusions

The decision making applied to the future of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses began in 1986 with the aim of solving their persistent problems related to structural defects, social problems, vandalism and a high proportion of unoccupied flats. The decision-making was delayed for several years because no funding for demolition had yet been available. During that time, new information was given to the Housing Committee from the public. On the one hand an architectural conservation society requested Historic Scotland to list the tower blocks in order to prevent the demolition. On the other hand, residents of Leith Fort demonstrated their full support for the demolition programme. These two opposing groups perceived the values of the tower blocks from different viewpoints. The conservation group evaluated the value of Leith Fort based on architectural history. Residents of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses had first-hand experiences, which were very negative. The contention that Leith Fort had such social historical value appeared to be provocative and offensive to the residents who would rather to forget the depressing past of living in the tower blocks. The Housing committee had no legal obligation to take cultural value into account because Grampian and Cairngorm houses were not listed buildings. As a result, it would appear that cultural value was irrelevant criteria to this decision making.

From a socio-economic standpoint, the demolition of Grampian and Cairngorms Houses seemed to be the most reasonable decision. A main reason was that Muirfield Glen Ltd could not provide a financial guarantee for its proposal. It was ambiguous as to whether the buildings would become economically sustainable after the refurbishment. Nonetheless, it seemed that the City Council intended not to take any risk with the refurbishment of these buildings, because their negative image had undermined the Housing Committee's confidence in the existence of the tower blocks.

Regarding the decision on the future of the tower blocks, the City Council had to take into account multiple factors, including the cost of repair, the performance of the buildings, the administration and management of public funding, and the resident

opinions. The criteria by which decision on the future of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses were made are:

- Structural integrity: the fundamental information from which other options derive.
- Economic viability: these factor constitute another condition forming the practical framework for decision-makers
- Functional performance of the building: a reason used mainly to assess efficiency of buildings. Records of the buildings' past performance assist decision makers to make decisions in this respect.
- Negative image and appearance: these criteria which have a psychological impact on the decision maker, investors and general public. These are an intangible value however the case study has demonstrated that they have a strong impact on the future of buildings.
- Cultural value: it was considered irrelevant to the decision making due to the absence of legal protection of the building. To some extent the cultural value was overshadowed by negative image that was held by the decision maker and stakeholders.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **An Examination of the Decision-making Criteria applied to the Futures of MacRae's Housing Estates**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

This case study aims to examine decision-making criteria applied to 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing estates. It takes examples from the works of Ebenezer James MacRae (1882-1951), a prominent figure in social housing development in Edinburgh. During the 1930s, MacRae, the City Architect, Edinburgh Corporation, designed social mass-housing with the concept of modern housing that was being widely used on the European continent. Examples of his work included Craigmillar Castle housing estate, Piershill Square, Saughton Hall and Colinton. Despite the modern influence, these 1930s housing estates were built in a traditional form – a pitch-roof, low-rise building with local materials. Around the 1970s, these housing estates inevitably went into decline. Many became unoccupied. Edinburgh City Council launched a housing rehabilitation programme in order to improve the housing and to attract more residents to live in the area. Despite its strenuous attempts, the City Council was unable to sustain the housing in satisfactory conditions. As seen in the previous chapters, by the end of the 1990s, demolition of unoccupied housing was carried out extensively. Some of MacRae's design housing estates were demolished to allow the redevelopment of the areas while some were refurbished. This case study undertakes a comparative analysis of criteria used in decisions on the future of two housing estates with almost identical characters, Piershill Square and Craigmillar Castle estate. The analysis will reveal the extent to which application of the same criteria may have an entirely different impact on essentially similar 20<sup>th</sup> century ordinary social housing.

## 6.2. Background of the Housing Estates

### 6.2.1. *A Brief Background of the 1930s Housing Improvement*

Piershill Square and Craigmillar Castle housing estate were part of a housing improvement programme commissioned during the 1930s. In the inner city area of Edinburgh the housing problems were considerable, especially with regard to the standard of sanitation in the housing. Horsey explains that Scotland's municipal public health controls had been tackling diseases and overcrowding in deprived housing areas since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the situation however remained unsatisfactory.<sup>1</sup> After World War I, the City Council carried out a large scale improvement programme aimed at refurbishing deteriorated houses, improving and expanding overcrowded flats, and building new houses. A report of the Housing Corporation in 1934 showed that:

"Since the War, large Improvement Schemes have been and are still carried out involving the demolition of about 4,000 houses and the re-housing of about 15,500 people in various areas at a total cost to date of about £1,500,000".  
(MacRae, E. J., Note on Rehousing, 1934.)

Most of the Corporation houses – approximately 10,500 units – are three-apartment dwellings, while over 2,250 have two-apartment and more than 1,500 four-apartment.<sup>2</sup> By the 1930s, it seems that Edinburgh had already had considerable experience in various aspects of mass housing.<sup>3</sup> Various Housing Acts were passed in order to deal with specific housings problems. At the time, one of the most serious issues was overcrowding. The 1935 Housing Act was passed to deal with this problem. It was reported that 17,101 houses in the City were overcrowded. This led to slum clearance and construction of new housings. The Scotsman described the situation:

"Altogether the corporation has dealt with nearly 7000 slum houses since the beginning of the campaign. No fewer than 22000 persons have been affected by the various schemes, and the majority of them have been accommodated in the new housing areas. (The weekly Scotsman (Edinburgh), 13 May 1939)

During the 1930s, new housing estates were built at various locations around the city of Edinburgh, for example Craigmillar, Piershill Square, Granton Mains, Stenhouse,

---

<sup>1</sup> Horsey, M., *Tenements & Towers* (Edinburgh, RCAHMS/HMSO, 1990), 8.

<sup>2</sup> The weekly Scotsman, (Edinburgh), 13 May 1939

<sup>3</sup> Hurd, R., "Clearing the Slum of Edinburgh" (Edinburgh, the Architectural Journal, 1930, photocopied) and MacRae, E. J., Note on Rehousing, (Edinburgh, 1934, photocopied)

Criagentinny and Saughtonhall. The programme was carried out under the commission of Edinburgh Housing Corporation. Ebenezer James MacRae was the City Architect, and his idea of modern housing had a considerable influence upon the design of these housing estates.

### 6.2.2. *An Important Local Architect: Ebenezer James MacRae*

Ebenezer James MacRae (1882-1951) came to Edinburgh when he was about 15 years old. He was trained as an architect and practiced in the city. He joined the Department of the City Superintendent of Works in 1908 and in later years became a city architect. During the First World War, he served with the Royal Engineers. MacRae was a highly experienced architect whose work included Portobello power station, the extension of the City chambers, Heriot-Watt College and the nurses' home at Bangour Hospital. He was also involved in the design of social housing, to which his contribution was highly



**Figure 6. 1** Ebenezer James MacRae [6-1]

appreciated. Sir John Falconer, former Lord Provost of Edinburgh praised MacRae for his interest in domestic architecture. He said designing social housing "*is the least independent of the arts and [...] for its appreciation requires an intimate knowledge of the social, political, and religious conditions of the people by whom it was produced*".<sup>1</sup>

Between the 1930 and 1940, the later period of his career, MacRae made considerable contributions to the reformation of Scottish tenement design. His idea of social mass-housing was accumulated during his visits, in private and on-duty, to various housing estates in Europe. MacRae travelled, extensively, through most parts of England and Scotland as well as through many parts of Europe. In 1930 and 1931 he went to Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. In 1934, he repeated this visit as a member of a deputation from the Scottish Department of Health. In 1935, he travelled to Prague and Paris, in 1936 to Copenhagen, and in 1937 to Paris again. One of MacRae's most important visits was that of 1934 when he was accompanied by John

<sup>1</sup> The Scotsman, (Edinburgh) 19 January 1951



Highton, the Secretary of Health Department. Mr Highton selected three senior companions for the trip to Europe, to visit selected housing estates. Mr. Highton's choices were Dr. W. G. Clark, senior depute medical officer of Health Department for the City of Glasgow, John Wilson, Chief Architect to the Scottish Department of Health, Edinburgh City Architect Ebenezer J. MacRae.<sup>1</sup> MacRae expressed his appreciation of the visit:

"It was of very great value to have this opportunity of studying on the spot the varying methods in which the different problems connected with the design, construction and general arrangement of housing schemes are being solved...the visit has been worth while." (MacRae, 1934, the Notes on General Impressions of Continental Housing)

In spite of the fact that the Continental visit was described as '*hurried*' and '*impressionistic*',<sup>2</sup> MacRae demonstrated his critical opinions on the sanitary and hygienic arrangements of the Continental houses in comparison to those in Scotland. He wrote:

"There is no question that the provision in the present Scottish tenement is, as a whole, superior to what is to be found in any of the countries visited...While in the Vienna tenement the principle has been to give access to a practically corresponding number of houses from one stair by having the house back-to-back, so that each landing serve directly four houses, an arrangement which is obviously not in accordance either with building By-laws here or with modern opinion as to hygienic housing". (MacRae, 1934)

His impression was not only reflected in his notes but also in his buildings. A good example of Continental influence in his work is Piershill Square, whose layout MacRae described as a '*continental arrangement*'.<sup>3</sup> It is obvious that a number of MacRae's housing estates were influenced by the Continental housing development.

During his career, MacRae was always interested in new ideas. According to his records and actual design, MacRae's criteria for housing design were based on practical aims rather than avant-garde architectural ideas. A comment by Sir John Falconer, who wrote MacRae obituary in the Scotsman, dated January 19<sup>th</sup> 1951, probably best captured the core strength of MacRae's designing skill. He wrote:

---

<sup>1</sup> John Frew, "Ebenezer MacRae and reformed tenement design 1930-1940" (St. Andrew, University of St. Andrew, 1991), 80.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

"...through his training and practical experience he was keenly conscious of practical construction and working fitness in domestic architecture, combining an unusual knowledge of new and old materials, and always ready to investigate new products." (Scotsman, Edinburgh, 19<sup>th</sup> January 1951)

MacRae's opinion derived from his knowledge and experience in practical housing work, particularly with regard to health and safety and economic consideration. From an aesthetic viewpoint, MacRae's design was never totally influenced by the modern idea. Frew comments that MacRae was a traditionalist whose passion was for Edinburgh Old Town, but, somehow, had an open-mind to the new. He adds '*Despite this, MacRae would never be more than a half-hearted convert to the Modernist cause. As Piershill Portobello and Restalrig Road elevations clearly reveal...*'.<sup>1</sup> The modern idea did not influence his design in terms of form and appearance but rather in practical aspects. He worked as the City Architect for 20 years and retired in July 1946. He died in 1951.

### 6.2.3. *A Building Description: Craigmillar Castle Housing Estate*

Craigmillar Castle housing estate was built in 1936. It comprised 624 units of three- and four-apartment flats. The estate was designed to accommodate families with children who needed to be relocated as a result of slum clearance in the city centre. The estate was situated adjacent to the junction of Peffermill Road, Niddrie Mains Road and Craigmillar Castle Road. The layout of the scheme was composed of six enclosed courtyards, one of which accommodated Peffermill Primary School. The estates covered Craigmillar Castle Road, -Avenue, -Terrace, -Loan and -Garden. Although such courtyard layout was usually found in traditional Scottish housing, MacRae expanded the scale of the courtyard in order to achieve modern standards of hygiene – maximum sunlight, open-space and fresh air for all housing units. The large courtyard reflected MacRae's influence, which was also found in Piershill Square.

The buildings were built with concrete but in the traditional form of two or three storey buildings with pitch roofs. The interior-space arrangement was described thus:

---

<sup>1</sup> John Frew, "Ebenezer MacRae and reformed tenement design 1930-1940" (St. Andrew, University of St. Andrew, 1991), 84.

"The various apartments are reasonable in size; one noticed built-in wardrobes, electric plugs for fires, for other electric appliances or the wireless sets; neat bathrooms, press accommodation, a useful size kitchenette and low set windows that housewives will not find awkward to becomingly and economically curtain...in the rear of the scheme is a grand open-space ten acres, which extends to the wall that surrounds the ground of Craigmillar Castle – which is reserved for a recreation ground by the Education Committee." (Evening News (Edinburgh) 16 June 1938)

The estate underwent a modernisation programme in 1972. Some parts of the concrete floors were removed and replaced with timber,<sup>1</sup> which would prevent problems related to condensation. Electricity, plumbing and drainage were upgraded to the standard of building in 1970s. Ventilation systems were introduced to the kitchens and living rooms. The fireplaces were covered and replaced with central heating systems. The layout of the interior space remained as in the original design. In general, the buildings' functional performance was in good conditions. Although housing in Craigmillar Castle Road was built with concrete but its appearance looked like traditional harled tenement, with pitched slated roof. In some parts there were also forestanding stair towers, with vertical lights, used by MacRae elsewhere.

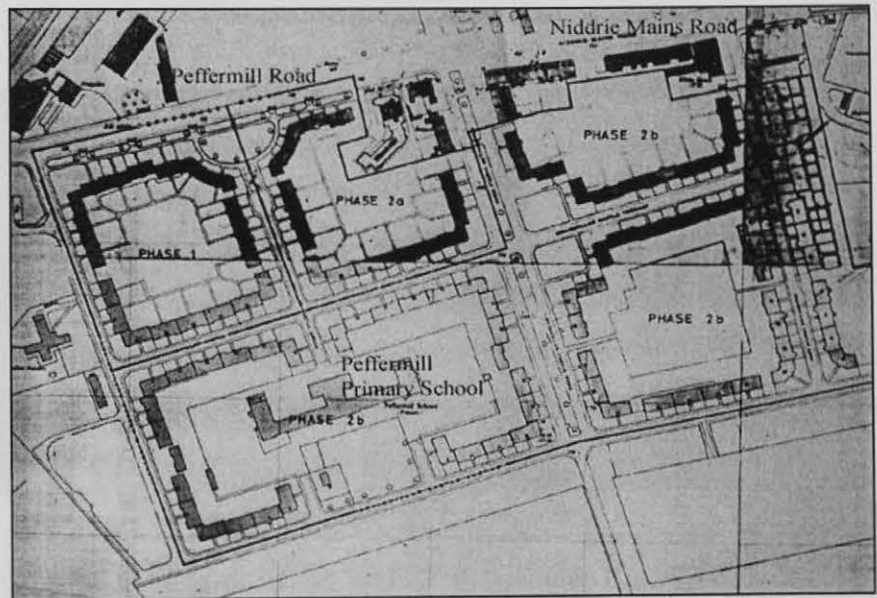


Figure 6. 2, right, Layout of Craigmillar Castle Road, 1972 [6-2]

<sup>1</sup> Architectural drawing of Craigmillar Castle estate cross-section, dated 1972, Neil Alexander, Record Office, the Housing Department, Edinburgh.



A corner of one of the latest developments—at Craigmillar. the roadway on the left having a dual carriageway

**Figure 6. 3** Craigmillar Castle Road housing estate; view from Craigmillar Castle road, from Evening News dated May 13th 1939 [6-3]



**Figure 6. 4** Craigmillar Castle Road housing estate in 2002, view from Niddrie Mains Road [6-4]

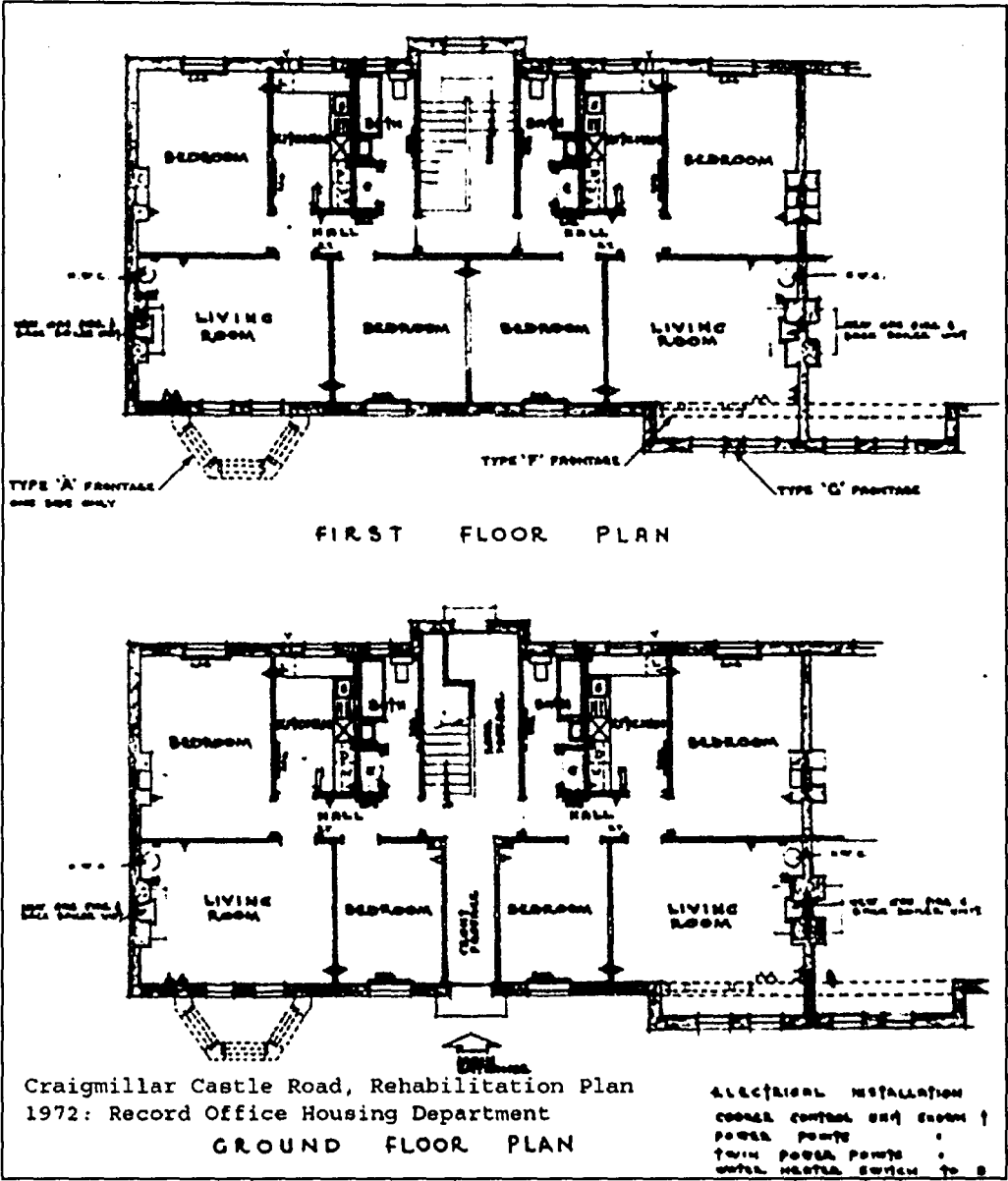


Figure 6. 5 Floor plans of 3-bedroom flats at Craigmillar Castle Road housing estate [6-5]

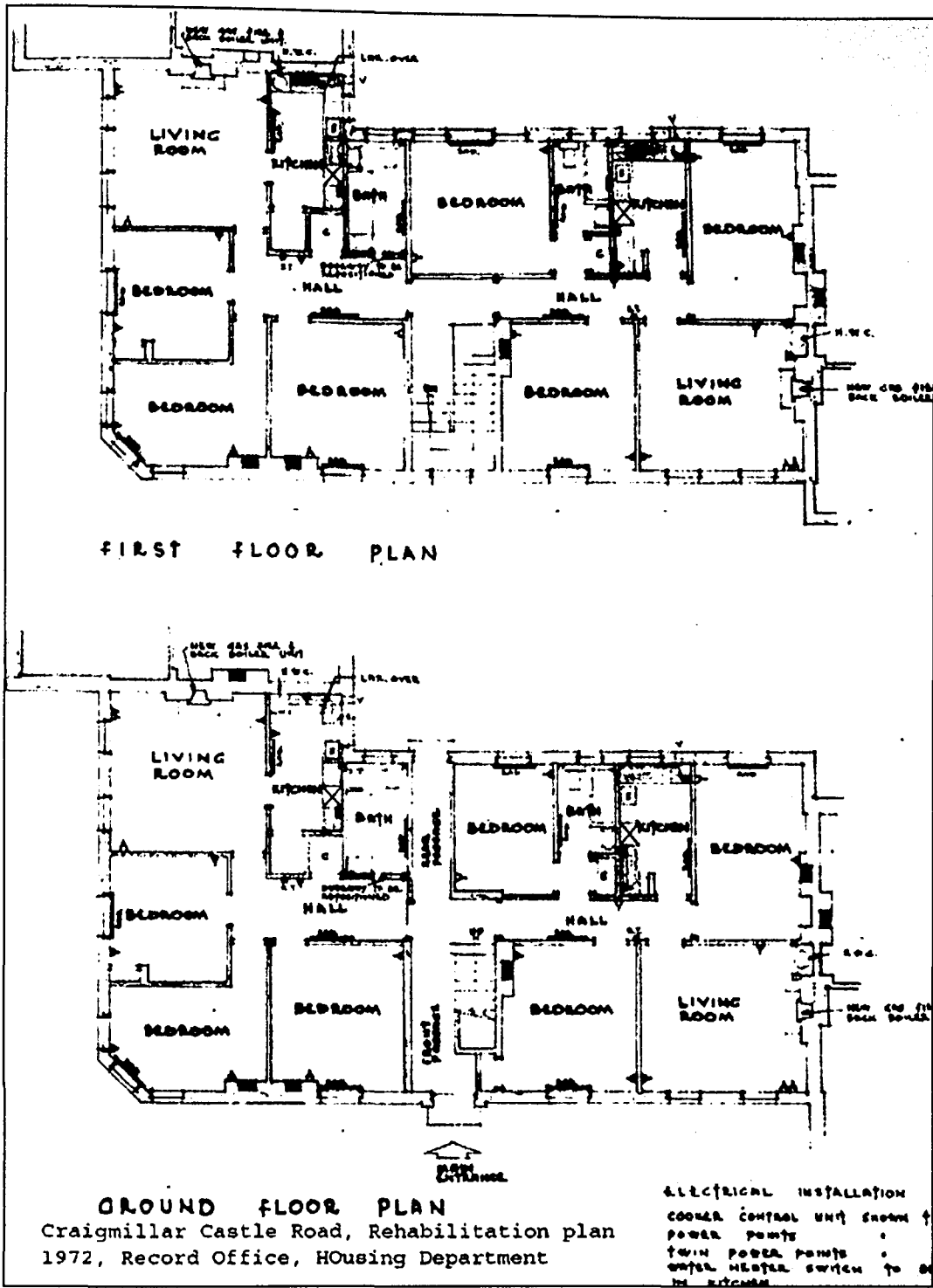
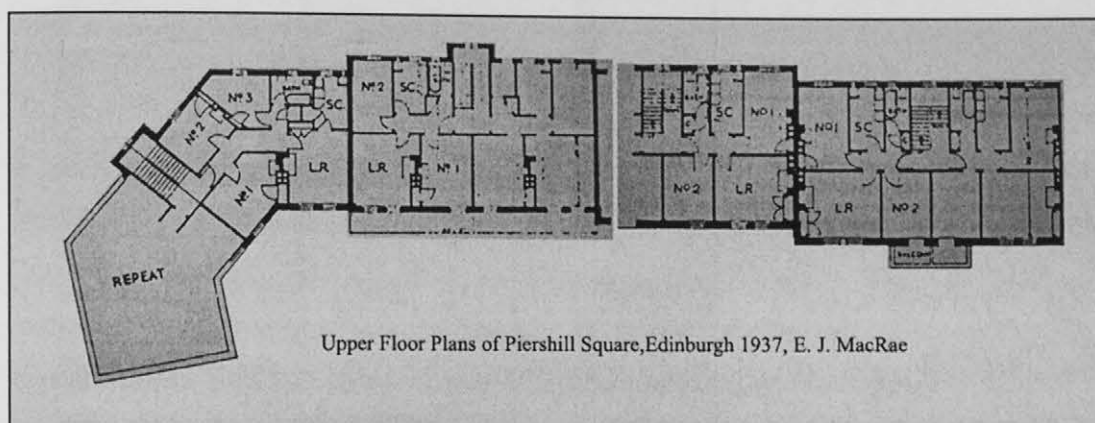


Figure 6. 6 Floor plans of 2-bedroom flats at Craigmillar Castle Road estate [6-6]



#### 6.2.4. *A Building Description: Piershill Square East & West*

Piershill Square was designed by Ebenezer J. MacRae in association with A. Rollo, J. A. Tweedie and M. Merchisen. The estate was built in 1937-39, in the later period of MacRae's career. The estate aimed to accommodate families with children dispossessed by the slum clearance programme. It comprised 234 three-apartment and 108 four-apartment dwellings. The main bedroom was 150 sq. ft., the second bedroom 120 sq. ft., the third bedroom of 116 sq. ft. and the living room 180 sq. ft. Each apartment had a scullery and a bathroom with hot and cold water and gas



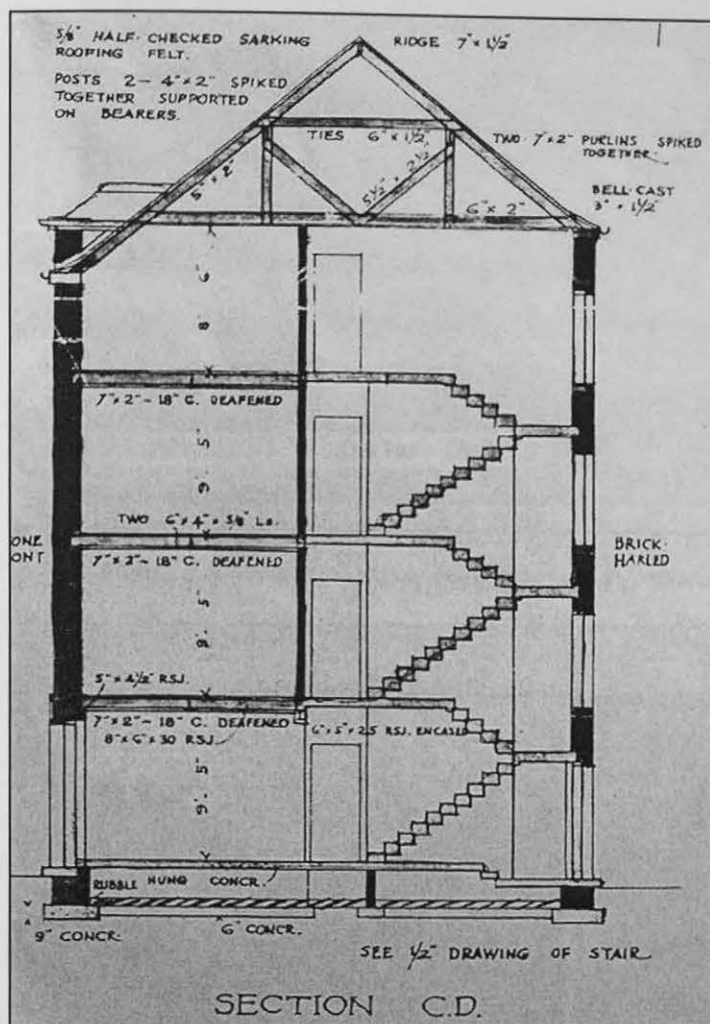
**Figure 6. 7** Upper Floor Plan of Piershill Square [6-7]

The construction of Piershill Square was of traditional stone masonry. It reused the stone of the Old Cavalry Barracks which previously occupied the site. Additional stone was from Northumberland and was of a type which had been found to weather well in Edinburgh. The buildings were given local traditional stone face-work under the supervision of Mr James Walker,<sup>1</sup> the clerk of work, who was an experienced stonemason. External walls on the front were of rubble stone masonry. The rear external walls were brick harled.<sup>2</sup> The foundation and the ground floor were made of concrete. The upper floor was timber with acoustic insulation. The pitch roof was of timber structure, with Welsh or Scottish slates. The stairs were built with rolled steel

<sup>1</sup> MacRae, E. J., (Official Architect, September 1941), 427-429.

<sup>2</sup> (Scottish) a form of roughcast widely used throughout Scotland and the north of England, in which a mixture of an aggregate (usually small even-sized pebbles) and a binding material (traditionally sand and lime, latterly Portland cement) is dashed, or hurled (harled) on to a masonry wall.  
<http://www.trp.dundee.ac.uk>

joists (RJS) encased in concrete. This type of structure was blast resistant which was also used for buildings built during World War II. Piershill Square East also had underground shelters. After the war, the shelters were no longer necessary and were covered under the pavement and courtyard areas.



**Figure 6. 8** Cross section of Piershill Square [6-8]

The flats were planned at 29 feet in width instead of the conventional standard of 24 feet. Consequently, the angle of the courtyard was also widened so that the necessary number of houses could be retained (See Figure 6.9). At the rear, drying areas were provided with clothe-poles and screens. An objective of the design concept was to create a very large open-space, comprising a bowling green and a children's playground. Eighty two per cent of area in the estate was open space.



**Figure 6. 9** Aerial view of Piershill Square Housing estate, 1991 [6-9]



**Figure 6. 10** The rear courtyard of Piershill square West, viewed from south (left) and (right) the front courtyard of Piershill Square East with playground, [6-10]

Piershill Housing estate had two open courtyards from which the names Piershill Square East and West derived. The estate was composed of 3- and 4-storey buildings linked to create an interesting skyline. MacRae gave high priority to the façade design. He made extra efforts on the elevation design by applying two types of floor-plan in order to



create unity in the façade. To obtain the desired elevation, MacRae rearranged staircases to the front or back of the buildings. Some flats also had balconies at the front elevation but they did not provided easy access. (See figures 6.7 and 6.11) Soil pipelines were hidden in the rear wall to minimise frost damage and to avoid an unsightly elevational effect.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 6. 11** shows views from East Courtyard [6-11]



**Figure 6. 12** Front elevation (left) and rear elevation of Pierhill Square West (right) [6-12]

<sup>1</sup> MacRae, Official Architect, September 1941.

### 6.3. Background to Problems related to the Social Housing Estates

#### 6.3.1. *An Outline of the Housing Situation during the 1970-1990s*

During the 1970-80s, the increasing number of unoccupied social houses caused



considerable concern for Edinburgh District Council. Although there was a great demand for social housing in Edinburgh, large numbers of social housing remained unoccupied. A number of prospective residents refused the offer of council flats due to their deplorable condition. As seen in Figure 6.13, for example, Mr Edward Lindsay and his family had been waiting for a council flat for 4 years, but decided to refuse the offer when they saw the flat's condition. In 1974, the number of people on the waiting list for social housing was reportedly reaching nearly 10,000.<sup>1</sup> Muriel Poole of the Evening News reported that the

**Figure 6. 13** The rejection of a housing offer [6-13]

number of unoccupied houses was quoted by the District Council as 1,543. To a certain extent, this problem was the result of the dilapidated physical condition of social housing which made the houses undesirable for prospective residents. This problem occurred not only in Edinburgh but also in many cities throughout the UK where large numbers of social houses had been built.

The housing stock required repair, modernisation, and some form of comprehensive rehabilitation in order to be brought 'up-to-date'. The local authorities were unable to deal with dilapidated houses on such a large scale, and therefore an alternative solution was introduced.<sup>2</sup> The scale of housing problems seemed to be immense. The Scotsman dated February 24<sup>th</sup> 1970, reported that among 4 cities in Scotland, 270,000 houses of

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 2 April 1974

<sup>2</sup> Balchin and Rhoden, *Housing: Essential Foundation*, (London, Routledge, 1998), 20.

the 900,000 council houses required remedial measures. There was a speculation, by news paper, that an enormous amount of funds would be required for the housing problems in Scotland and that the problems would require immediate action to prevent them falling into an irreversible state.



The problems were greater and more urgent in Edinburgh and Glasgow since greater numbers of social houses had been built in these two cities. Many of the dilapidated houses were in the 1930s housing schemes. The City Council launched housing improvement programmes to modernise housing standards, focusing specifically on the improvement of environmental conditions. In the Scotsman, Mr. Peter James, a deputy city architect for housing, said *"the older schemes were often visually unsatisfactory and suffered from the lack of proper landscaping, unrestricted use of cars, neglect of private gardens, lack of play spaces and substandard dwelling."*<sup>1</sup> He explained further

<sup>1</sup> The Scotsman (Edinburgh) 24 February 1970



that "Of the £883,681 rehabilitation fund, 36 per cent would be spent on introducing new housing, 40 percent on environmental improvement, 15 per cent on general repair work and 9 per cent on general improvement".<sup>1</sup> The improvement programme was not sustainable and the housing had often been vandalised and fallen into disrepair.

The situation of unoccupied housing and large waiting list was not improving. According to Councillor Sleight, the number of people on the waiting list for social housing in Edinburgh had increased to 13,000 and the number of vacant houses increased from 2,500 to 4,000 during the early 1980 up to 1986.<sup>2</sup> Ken Smart reported in the Evening News that of all 4,000 unoccupied council-houses, 700 had been vacant for a number of years.<sup>3</sup> Ken Smart referred to a report which showed that 300 houses had been pending demolition. At that time, the City Council was being criticised for its ineffectual housing policy.

**Edinburgh now has 4000 EMPTY council houses.**

And 700 of them have been vacant for a number of years — because they are in unpopular areas or run down.

Evening News 12 August 1986

**By KEN SMART**

A report shows a total of 4000 empty houses — 700 long-term "voids," 300 vacant pending demolition, and a further 1400 empty so that modernisation work can be carried out.

The report identifies 1600 houses vacant for a shorter time between tenancies.

Councillor Griffiths said that, in order to speed up the reletting of the 1600, and to bring the longer-term vacancies back into the housing system, it was planned to double to 30 the number of staff working in the housing department's "voids" team.

Other ideas to help reduce the problem...

- The number of qualification points for certain less popular areas might be reduced.
- Potential tenants will be accompanied by housing officials, so that the department know the reasons for refusal of a tenancy.
- Department officials are to report on a system of multiple offers — where a number of potential tenants might be offered the same house and told that the first to accept will be given the tenancy.
- Advertising of houses or areas difficult to let is also being considered.

Figure 6. 15 report on the numbers of redundant social housing in Edinburgh [6-15]

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 27 May 1986

<sup>3</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 12 August 1986

In the 1990s, Edinburgh social housing however went further into decline and the numbers of unoccupied social housing remained substantial. It was said that 4,543 houses were classified as 'Below Tolerable Standard'.<sup>1</sup> These houses were not up to tolerable standard such as:

- 1) A fixed bath or shower with hot and cold running water;
- 2) A wash hand basin with hot and cold running water;
- 3) A sink with hot and cold water running;
- 4) An inside toilet.

According to figure 6.18, in 1993, the Evening News claimed that there were 1,120 houses without a hot water supply or an inside toilet and there were 1,910 houses had neither bath nor shower. These houses were classified as uninhabitable and required immediate improvement. Otherwise, such houses should be demolished.

**Figure 6. 16** Evening News 13 January 1993 [6-16]

## Decline hits city housing

EN 13/1/93  
THE standard of housing in Edinburgh is declining, according to a new study.

Government statistics show the number of sub-standard homes in the Capital is on the increase.

Between 1991 and 1992 the number of dwellings in the city officially classified as "below tolerable standard" — BTS — rose from 4369 to 4543, an increase of 4 per cent.

BTS is defined as lacking one or more of the following:

- A fixed bath or shower with hot and cold water running water.

- A wash hand basin with hot and cold running water.
- A sink with hot and cold running water.
- An inside toilet.

The figures show that of the 4543 sub-standard houses, 1120 were without either a hot water supply or inside toilet, while 1910 had neither a bath nor shower.

The figures brought condemnation from Edinburgh South MP Nigel Griffiths who demanded Secretary of State Ian Lang launches an immediate aid programme for these homes.

He said: "For nearly 2000 Edinburgh residents not to have a bath or even a shower in 1993 is a disgrace.

"The picture in Lothian is even worse — 2060 homes lack a bath or a shower while 1578 have no hot water and/or no inside toilet.

"A total of 6867 homes in Lothian are below tolerable standard according to these figures.

Evening News 13 January 1993

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 13 January 1993

Around the mid 1990s, a policy of demolition has been applied to most severely declined housing estates. According to Peter McLean, business manager of the Housing Department, general decision making criteria employed to deal with the social housing are 1) Conditions of the houses; 2) Investment planning framework and 3) social indicators. The conditions of the houses include issues such as the life span of the buildings, the investment requirements, and the maintenance programme. The investment planning framework is concerned with investment policy and the availability of funding from both public and private sectors. Social indicator is an overall result of multiple factors. It includes ownership, the proportion of vacant flats in the buildings, demographics, age groups, ethnicity, people with special needs and the homeless. These three broad criteria are employed by the Housing Department when dealing with social housing. The next section will examine in detail the way in which the Housing Committee employed these reasons to deal with Craigmillar Castle road and Piershill Square housing estates.

Dear Chanen

I have been passed your question from Stephen concerning your e mail

The answer to your question is not really straight forward. However as a starter the following might be useful, if you have further questions I will be pleased to assist.

The Housing sites which are identified for redevelopment or regeneration are currently identified by myself and debated and decided on by our senior management team. The information used for this exercise is analysed from our stock condition survey and our investment planning framework databases. To this is added information concerning social indicators, suitability of property types and external environment indicators. The resultant analysis allows a physical indicator in terms of life span, investment requirements and 30 year programme of investment with maintenance and repairs taken into consideration. i.e. physical with financial characteristics. The social characteristics, although in some cases can be subjective in analysis include items such as reletting, turnover periods void distribution levels of right to buy levels of social inclusion/exclusion age profile and area profile. i.e. social indicators. all are given points within a matrix and weighted where necessary. The above is usually completed against any new housing legislation and the like and the availability of levels of funding from both private and public.

I trust this helps meantime, if you require further information please contact accordingly.

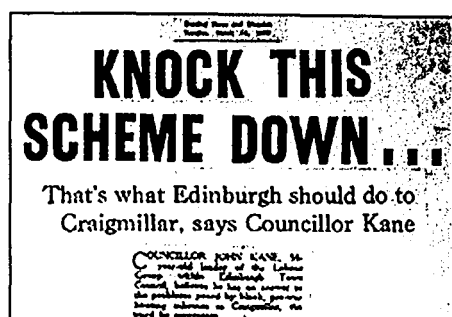
regards

peter maclean  
tel 0131 529 7228

**Figure 6. 17** An electronic mail dated 25 February 2003 from Business manager Housing Department [6-17]

### 6.3.2. *The Demolition of Craigmillar Castle Housing Estate*

Craigmillar Castle Road housing estate had been left to decline for a long period. From the public viewpoint, Craigmillar Castle estate was visually appalling resulting in the



**Figure 6. 18** Evening News 14 March 1967 [6-18]

area having a deprived image. 'Knock This Scheme Down' and similar stories were continuously in the headline from the late 1960s. The estate was cited as '*soul destroying*'. It was '*the most obvious example of the need for rehabilitation within the city*' by the City Architect Department.<sup>1</sup> In 1967, Councillor John Kane claimed that many houses in the Craigmillar housing estate were overcrowded. He argued that

demolition would be the best solution for this horrendous residential area and new houses with higher density were needed. Nonetheless, residents of Craigmillar Castle estate were of a different opinion. They refuted Councillor Kane's claim and said that the estate was good housing with adequate facilities. The estate was situated near many playing fields, a library, four schools, five churches, bingo hall and golf courses. Residents of Craigmillar argued that the problem of overcrowding resulted from mismanagement by the Housing Corporation. There were many 4- and 5-apartment flats that were occupied by single residents, elderly people, and widows while large families with many children were allocated to 3-bedroom flats. Lack of maintenance was another cause of decline. Councillor Kane's claim was seen as a pretext to demolish the housing in the area to make way for redevelopment. In 1972, the housing estate was modernised in 1970s building standards. According to Neil Alexander of the Record Officer of Edinburgh Housing Department, the 1970s improvement programme included repairs, renovating the physical appearance of buildings and upgrading building services such as the electricity and plumbing system, kitchens and bathrooms. There were no significant changes to the structure and form of the buildings.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 23 March 1967

<sup>2</sup> Conversation with Neil Alexander, February 2003

During the mid 1980s, problems in the Craigmillar housing estate worsened. The estate became known as one of the worst residential areas in Edinburgh. It was reported that the estate was deprived in various aspects, and that the population of the area was in a decline.<sup>1</sup> Vandalism and violence were on the increase and the number of unemployed

## Gardens clean-up magnet

... TO DRAW PEOPLE BACK  
TO THE EMPTY HOUSES

Evening News 3 September 1983

Work is to start within the next few days on a scheme to improve 52 backgreens of flats in Craigmillar, Edinburgh.

The project is being welcomed by local people, who say the clean-up could encourage tenants into the many houses lying empty.

And they express hope that this is "just a start" and that in the not-too-distant future all the housing scheme's backgreens will be tidied.

The present scheme is being carried out by the district council, backed by the Manpower Services Commission, and involves the gardens of houses around Pettermill Primary School, the east side of Craigmillar Castle Loan and 31-43 Craigmillar Castle Avenue.

Dividing fences will be put up, the ground turned over and grassed, drying areas paved and bin holders provided. Work is expected to be completed by March.

men was among the highest of urban areas in Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Mr Robert Hunter, the co-ordinator of the Council's programme for Craigmillar Castle housing improvement, showed the Evening News a report concerning social problems in the area. The report indicated that local doctors feared that the incidence of alcoholism, drug abuse and suicide was on the increase. Local people were subdued. Many were having financial problems.<sup>3</sup> The report concluded that "a major clean-up of gardens of empty houses and the open spaces was a top priority task, and also that urgent attention was required in the area of unemployment and job creation.

Figure 6. 19 Evening News 3  
September 1983 [6-19]

In 1983, the Housing Committee seemed to believe that if the area had a better appearance, more people would be drawn to live in the area. Accordingly, the

1980s improvement programme for Craigmillar Castle housing estate remained focused on the visual image of the area. Fences were built for each house's garden. New pavement and rubbish bins were provided. However this programme only had short-term effects. The Craigmillar housing had been in a state of severe deprivation and was known as an area of concentrated social problems. Poverty was the most pivotal problem in the area and had a direct impact on housing problems. There were a large number of empty houses, which deteriorated rapidly. With the benefit of hindsight, it

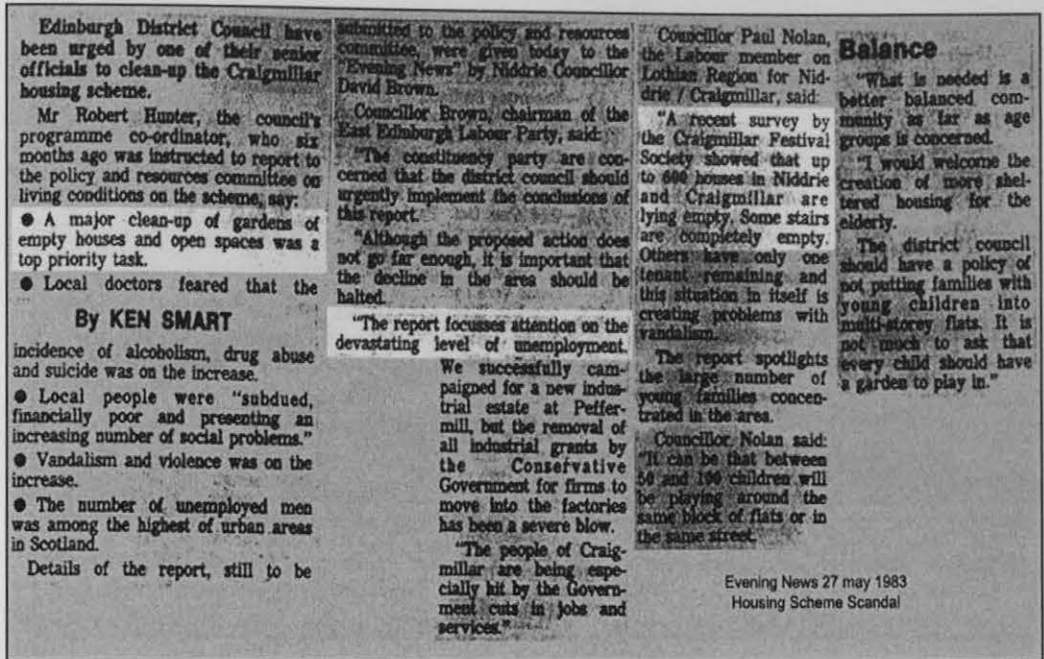
<sup>1</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 8 June 1984

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Evening News (Edinburgh) 27 May 1983



appears that the problems had become too complicated to solve by merely improving the landscape or appearance of the buildings.



**Figure 6. 20** Evening News reported on social problems and redundant social housing in Edinburgh [6-20]

Around the end of the 1990s, Edinburgh District Council fully realised that the magnitude of housing problems in the Craigmillar Castle estate and launched a comprehensive urban regeneration programme. In 1999, the estate underwent an extensive demolition programme, to make way for the redevelopments. The programme was aimed at improving social structure on the estate and creating more jobs and commercial activity. It also involved minor upgrading of the building services such as the ventilation, heat insulation, and the heating system. The refurbishment programme was applied privately owned houses (marked in dark colour on the map) and to most of the houses situated close to main roads (left unmarked on the map). All the other 1930s that were unoccupied were demolished, regardless of its types. Some single houses, which theoretically were ideal residential buildings, were also demolished. The demolitions therefore gave a fresh impetus to improvements in Craigmillar area.





**Figure 6. 21** Map of Craigmillar Castle housing estate showing demolished buildings marked in red; dark colour representing privately owned buildings [6-21]

In 2002, Craigmillar Castle estate contained a small proportion of its original 1930s buildings. The new houses were low-rise semidetached buildings with contemporary elements, for example glass-canopies at the entrances, projecting window frames. The layout and appearance of the area had changed significantly.



**Figure 6. 22** Views from Craigmillar Castle Gardens looking at Craigmillar Castle Terrace. On the left are new houses and on the right are office buildings, 2002 [6-22]



**Figure 6.23** Views of Craigmillar Castle estate in 2002: A) Houses in Craigmillar Castle Terrace; B) Houses with the original MacRae design in Craigmillar Castle Loan; C) Detached houses with a small front garden and a modern glass canopy at the front door [6-23]

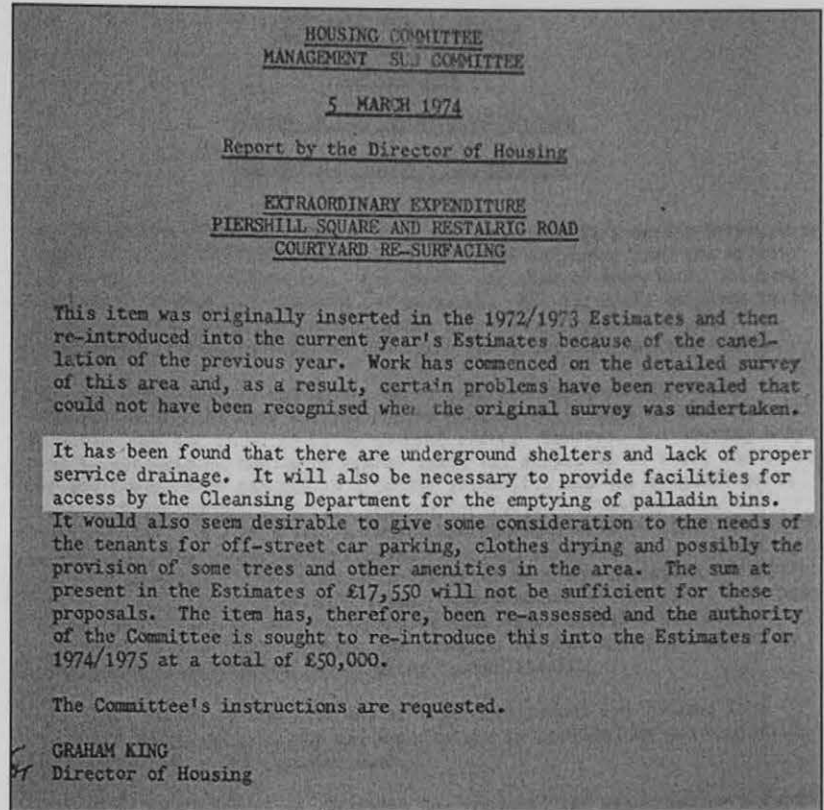
### 6.3.3. *The refurbishment of Piershill Square Housing Estate*

Piershill Square has generally been recognised as a good housing estate. Residents were satisfied with the functional performance of the buildings. The environment was reported to be pleasant and social problems low. According to Stephen Whitehead,<sup>1</sup> an architect with the Edinburgh Housing Department, the housing estate never encountered serious problems related to antisocial behaviour or substandard facilities. The building's structure had usually been in good condition. In the early 1970s, Piershill Square also underwent a refurbishment programme similar to that of the Craigmillar Castle estate. The aim of the refurbishment was to improve the environment and landscape including the pavement, the drying area, car-parking spaces and truck-access to paladin bins in the waste disposal areas. The most serious problem was with

<sup>1</sup> Conversation with Stephen Whitehead, February 2003

drainage, and was caused by underground bomb shelters.<sup>1</sup> This problem caused a delay to the refurbishment programme which had to be postponed until the following years. The cost of refurbishment was estimated at £50,000.

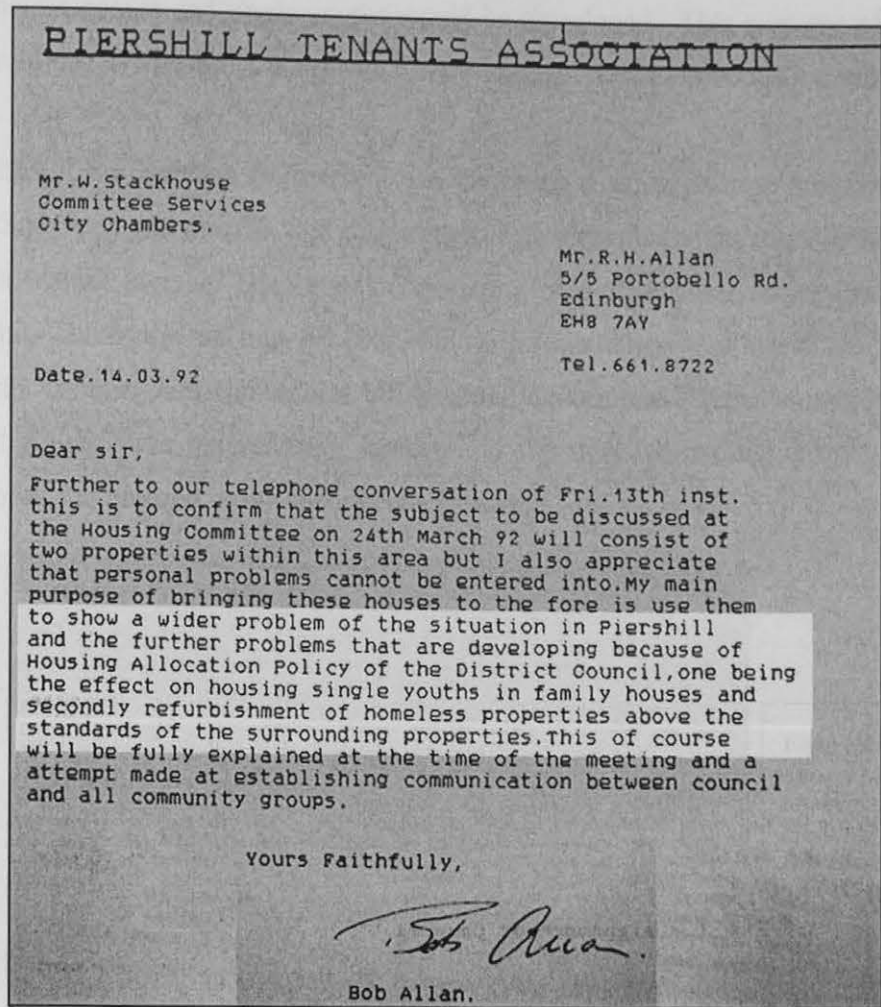
**Figure 6. 24**  
Minute of Meeting  
of Housing  
committee  
Management sub-  
committee 5  
March 1974 [6-24]



During the 1980s, when Craigmillar Castle housing estate was having problems with anti-social behaviour and appalling environmental conditions, Piershill Square seemed to have relatively few housing problems. Nonetheless, Piershill Square underwent a period in which certain numbers of flats were unoccupied. The vacant flats were used as furnished accommodation for homeless people and single youths. This was a result of the housing allocation policy which aimed to maximise the use of all unoccupied housing units. The introduction of homeless people and single youths in the community caused anxiety to the other residents. In 1992, Piershill Tenants Association made a complaint to the Housing Committee about this allocation policy. Mr Robert H Allan, a representative for Piershill Square, wrote a letter of complaint to Mr W. Stackhouse, of Committee Services.

<sup>1</sup> Director of Housing, 1974, Report on Extraordinary Expenditure Piershill Square



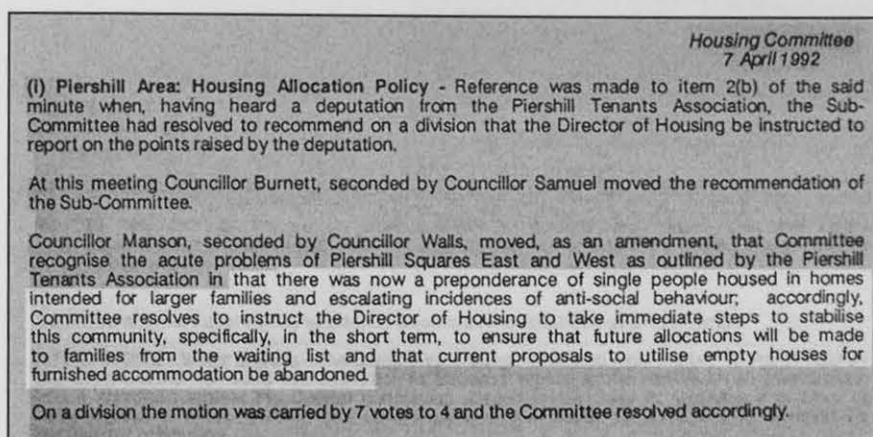


**Figure 6. 25** A letter of complaint dated 14 March 1992 from Piershill Tenants Association to the Housing Committee [6-25]

The letter referred to the increasing problems of antisocial behaviour in Piershill Square, which the tenants association claimed to be a consequence of the allocation policy. Piershill Tenants Association considered that it was inappropriate to allocate homeless people, single youths into a housing estate designed for families with children. The association was also concerned that the homeless flats were being refurbished to a standard above the surrounding flats. The Housing Committee responded promptly to the complaint. In a meeting of the Housing Committee, held on April 7<sup>th</sup> 1992, three weeks after the letter was submitted, the Housing Committee resolved that immediate action was required to stabilise the community and that the proposal to use unoccupied

flats for homeless people and single youths would be abandoned. This was one of the few social problems in Piershill Square which were reported to the Housing Committee.

In the early 1990s, the Housing Department was preparing a modernisation programme for Piershill Square as part of a 30-year chronological programme for the modernisation of interwar housing. Piershill Square was considered for a modernisation programme by the Housing Committee on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1990, but no further action was taken. In June 1992, Piershill Tenants Association sent the Housing Committee a letter complaining that Piershill Square was deteriorating rapidly and the decision-making process on refurbishment of the housing estate should be accelerated.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 6. 26 A**  
Minute of the  
Meeting of the  
Housing  
Committee held  
on 7 April 1992  
[6-26]

In a meeting of the Housing Committee held on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1992 the Housing Committee acknowledged the problems and resolved that refurbishment should commence in the following year 1993. Modernisation began at the end of 1993 and was divided into 5 phases through 1992-1996.

In phase 3 of the modernisation programme, the Housing Department had to rebuild part of the buildings. Some sections of the buildings had sunk as a result of a serious foundation problem. The problems were likely caused by the underground bomb shelters. The City Council decided to build new foundations and to reassemble the sunken section so as to retain the original appearance of the building. In 2002, Piershill

<sup>1</sup>The Minute of the Meeting of the Housing Committee, 2 June 1992

Square was considered a desirable residential area and also recognised as a good and safe environment for children.

### Update for Piershill homes

*EV 8.2.95*

A £1.5 million modernisation programme for 60 city council houses has been unveiled.

The homes in Piershill Square East are to be fully modernised by the end of this year.

Tenants have been told they will be given a choice of kitchen and bathroom designs.

Their flats are to be rewired, replumbed and new heating systems and windows will be installed.

Work is due to start in April and all the houses are expected to be completed by Christmas.

During the modernisation, tenants and their families will be decanted to temporary caravan homes at Lochend Park.

Details of the plans were revealed to tenants at a meeting last night with officials from Edinburgh District Council.

City housing convener Mary Muiligan said the work is the latest part of the council's improvement scheme for older houses in the Piershill area.

Figure 6. 27 Eveing News 8 February 1995 [6-27]

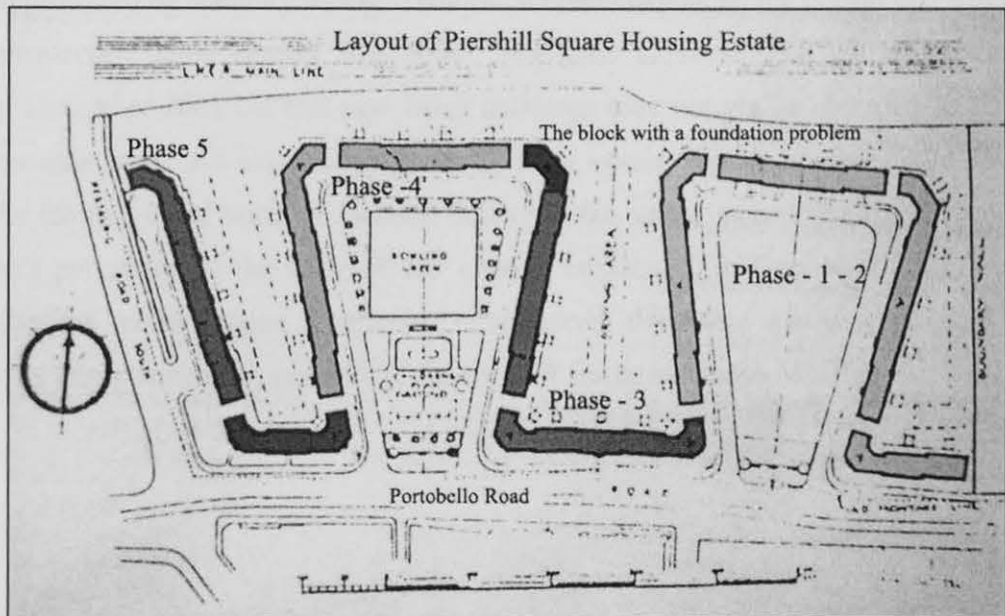


Figure 6. 28 Layout of Piershill square, showing 5 phases of the refurbishment project during 1993-1995 [6-28]



From a cultural viewpoint, the estate benefited from a window conservation programme in 1995. The aim of the programme was to enhance the visual image of the area by changing the windows within the area to double-glazing with timber frames. In legal terms, the housing estate had characteristics which could qualify for statutory listing status and should have been listed as buildings of architectural interest. The design of Piershill was a result of his long experience, collected from extensive travel to the Continent, as well as from his practice in building construction – in Scotland in particular. The architectural design concept of the estate is recognised as integrating modern mass-housing design and the traditional Scottish tenement. Its large open courtyards and the layout of the buildings are of European continental influence. The construction and materials use traditional Scottish methods. Piershill Square would have been listed as an example of “reformed tenement design”<sup>1</sup> in Scottish housing during the interwar period. The estate was an outstanding example of early municipal mass housing. However statutory listing of Piershill Square did not take place.

During the period of research for this thesis in November 2001, Piershill Square had not yet been protected by statutory listing. Historic Scotland explained the reason in a letter to the researcher, dated January 26th 2002. The letter explained that the estate was listed in December 2001 but that new listed buildings may not yet be recorded on the computer data base. An explanation given by Miss Louisa Humm implies that a key factor for the non-listed status of Piershill Square in the earlier period was the Historic Scotland’s perception of the value of 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. In December 2001, ten years after the modernisation programme commenced, the estate was listed category C(s) for its importance as an example of the work of Ebenezer James MacRae.

---

<sup>1</sup> John Frew, “Ebenezer MacRae and reformed tenement design 1930-1940” (St. Andrew, University of St. Andrew, 1991), 80.

# HISTORIC SCOTLAND



26<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Chanen Munkong,  
School of Arts, Culture And Environment,  
University of Edinburgh  
20 Chambers Street  
Edinburgh,  
EH1 1JZ

Dear Chanen Munkong,

## PIERSHILL HOUSING ESTATE

Thank you for your letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> January, which Mr Haynes has passed to me. I have recently completed the Listing Resurvey of the area around Piershill housing estate, and you will be pleased to know that the Piershill estate has been included in the new list, which was issued on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2002. It is possible that this new listing had not been entered onto our database when you spoke to our listing officer. I enclose a copy of the list description.

The original lists of buildings of special architectural and historical interest were mostly drawn up in the 1970s, when attitudes to architectural merit were much more conservative than they are now. Historic Scotland is currently carrying out a resurvey of the whole of Scotland, and all the buildings not currently listed are reconsidered. This is done on a parish by parish basis, and you will understand that it is a very long process. However, we also consider individual buildings that are proposed for listing by members of the public, and are happy to receive any other suggestions that you may have.

I wish you all the best in your PhD,

Yours Sincerely,

MISS LOUISA HUMM  
Assistant Inspector of Historic Buildings.

Figure 6. 29 Letter dated 26 January 2002 from Historic Scotland [6-29]

## 6.4. A Comparative Analysis of Decision-making Criteria

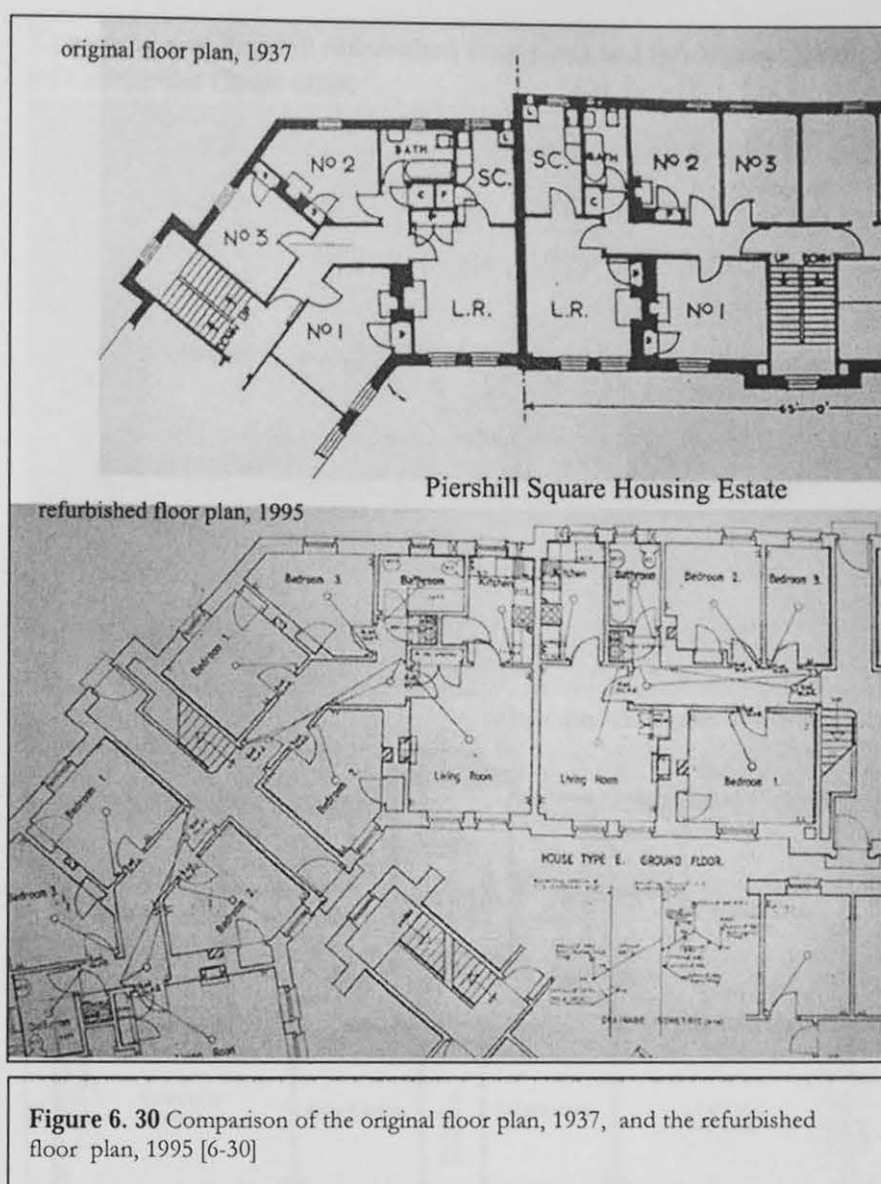
### 6.4.1. *Essential requirements*

Essential requirement is an important factor when deciding whether or not to refurbish a building. It involves structural condition, practicality of space arrangement and adaptability. Piershill Square was built of stone masonry and had good structural stability. In comparison with concrete structure of Craigmillar, stone masonry endures Scotland's severe weather over a long period of time. When repairs were needed, the building also benefited from the established knowledge of Scottish stone masonry. Despite an unpleasant image, the Craigmillar housing estate was in good structural condition. At each interview with three housing officers, Stephen Whitehead, a city architect, Neil Lawrence, a record officer and Peter Mclean, a business manager, they confirmed that both Piershill Square and Craigmillar Castle Road had satisfactory structural stability.

Refurbishments of social housing depend on the adaptability of the buildings, in terms of structural and spatial arrangements. In the case of Piershill Square, Mr. Whitehead commented that there was no problem with the modernisation of Piershill Square. The buildings required minimal adaptation in terms of structure; however, slight adjustments of the kitchens and bathrooms were required to accommodate new appliances.<sup>1</sup> Modernisation usually involved service systems such as electricity, plumbing and acoustic and heat insulation. All these are fundamental elements for the effective performance of the housing. The high degree of adaptability in these buildings was a result of MacRae's concern for the practical aspects of housing design. MacRae realised that basic building services would require periodical upgrades in order to accommodate improved standards of living. As a result, MacRae's design was highly flexible and remains functional today. The modernised plans of Piershill Square (Figure 7.34) demonstrate that the buildings required minimum alteration in order to accommodate a modern lifestyle. Buildings with high flexibility generate better potential for refurbishment.

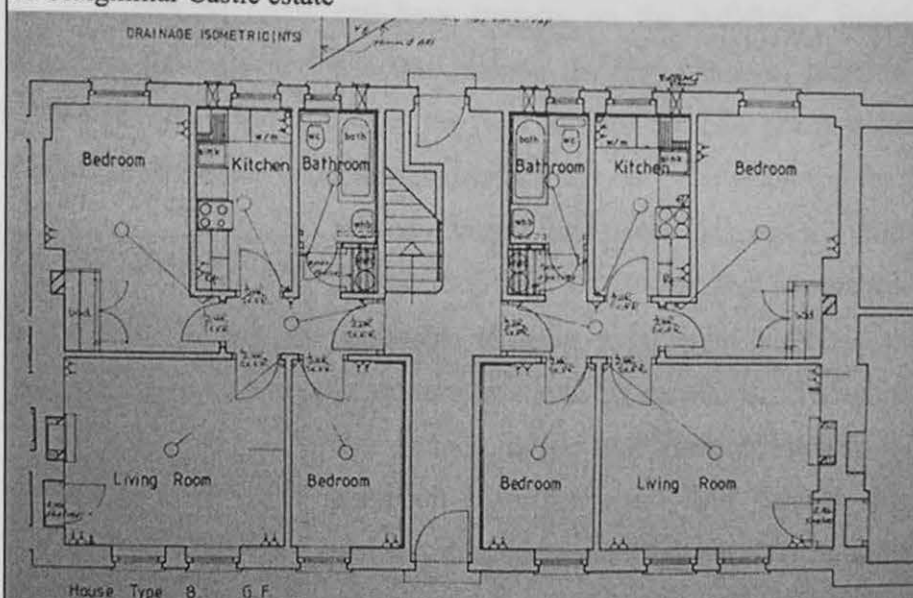
---

<sup>1</sup> Conversation with Stephen Whitehead a city architect in February, 2003



Craigmillar Castle housing estate should have had the same degree of practicality as Piershill Square, since both housing estates had almost identical floor plans. This also implies that their functional performance, as dwellings, should not have been significantly different. Although both estates appeared to have similar qualities, they were destined to different futures. It would appear that structural integrity, functional performance of the buildings and adaptability are not decisive criteria by which the decision to refurbish a housing estate may be made.

Comparison of Piershill refurbished floor plans and the original floor plan of Craigmillar Castle estate



refurbished floor plan of Piershill Square

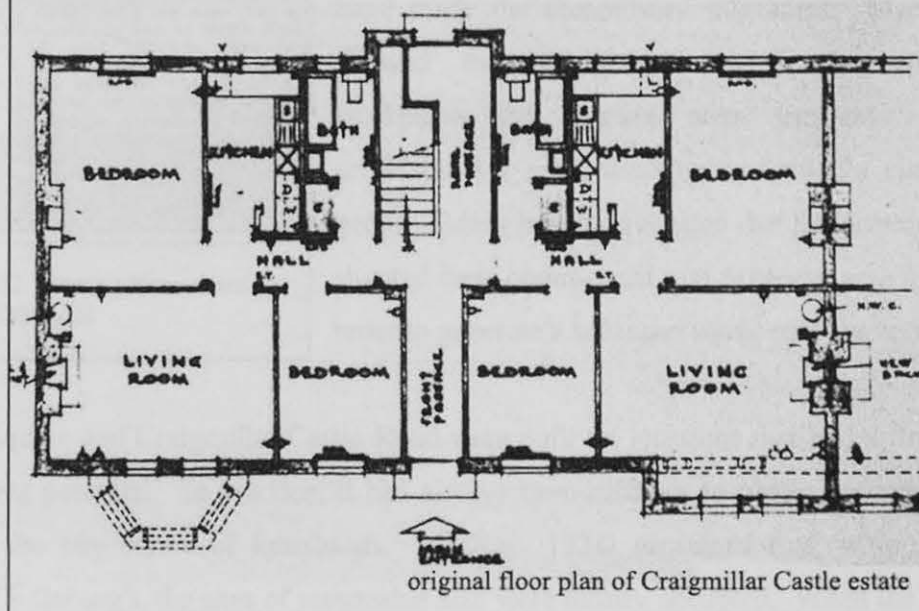


Figure 6. 31 Comparison shows minimal adaptation of floor plans would have been required for refurbishment of Craigmillar Castle Road housing estate. [6-31]

### 6.4.2. Location

The location of a housing estate can have impacts on the buildings' functional performance and on the residents. MacRae realised the importance of location and therefore devoted his best effort to finding the right location for new housing estates. Firstly, new housing estates for relocated residents should not be situated too far from

#### *Too Far From Work*

One of the great difficulties experienced in rehousing the people lies in providing them with houses in the centre, or comparatively near the centre, of the city, close to their work. For this reason, many families have had, perforce, to refuse alternative accommodation offered them on the outskirts. They could not, indeed, afford to leave the city as their daily bread depends upon their being within reach of their work. And so they sit in the most horrible discomfort, unable to move. One of the worst houses I have ever seen houses a family in such circumstances. They say they have been offered a house in one of the new suburbs, but it is of no use to them for the husband has got a small business together and to move out of the central part of the city would mean that he could not afford the transport, and that the business would go. He also has a young son who has started to work and he, too, would lose his job were he transferred to an outlying district as he has to start very early in the morning. This means that the whole family would have to go on Public Assistance. This family's position in regard to the necessity for obtaining a house near their work has many parallels, and is a strong argument for the building of new houses on city sites wherever possible.

**Figure 6. 32** Evening News dated 21 January 1939 [6-32]

the city centre and work places, to minimise changes in life style. If their new houses are in a reasonable location, a group of residents should experience less housing problems. Secondly, the city council would not have to invest in the provision of infrastructure and services for the new housing estate, such as new schools and basic services for the everyday demands of those who have made the compulsory migration. MacRae showed that an urban environment where workplace and market were available was preferable for most working and middle classes people. Mass housing required that its location be situated near commercial and business activity in order to generate a balanced urban environment

Piershill Square and Craigmillar Castle Road were built on locations that had different development potential. In practice, it had always been difficult to obtain appropriate sites near the city centre of Edinburgh. MacRae (1934) explained that, within the vicinity of Edinburgh, the sites of reasonable size were mostly occupied. When the Old Cavalry Barrack reallocated itself to a new site, the Housing Corporation had a tremendous opportunity to acquire the vacant site for a new housing estate. The location of the Old Cavalry Barrack offered considerable advantage to Piershill Square since 1930s. The site was adjacent to a main tramline and within a reasonable distance of the previous housing area. Craigmillar Castle Road was unfortunately situated in a suburban area of Edinburgh. Although the Housing Corporation arranged amenities and



facilities for Craigmillar Castle Road estate, the facilities went into decline because there were lack of business and commercial activities within the area. In the 1990s, central Edinburgh expanded and Piershill Square became a housing estate in the city centre area. Craigmillar Castle Road housing estate remained a suburban area and its environment did not undergo sufficient development. The initial facilities and amenities became deficient due to the stagnant local economy of Craigmillar area. Since the mid 1980s, prospective residents for Craigmillar Castle Road were reportedly reduced because of the unpleasant location. The area was condemned as a 'No Go Area' or 'uninhabitable'. Due to the numbers of unoccupied buildings and the demand

Whether they're what are called "desirable properties," however, is another matter altogether. They happen to be in the city's housing "no go" areas, where Edinburgh Corporation find it difficult to let a house, far less sell one. Housing areas such as West Pilton Circus and Craigmillar Castle Road.

**Figure 6. 33** James Gray's report in the Evening News 12<sup>th</sup> October 1973 [6-33]

for accommodation for people who were desperate for a place to live, Edinburgh Housing Committee encouraged the Housing Department 'to rent the houses at all cost' and 'regardless of their backgrounds', in order to reduce the numbers of redundant social housing. As a result, the housing estate lost its social-economic balance which in turn exacerbated

social-economic problems in the area as well as the number of unoccupied houses.

In 1999, Craigmillar Castle Road was demolished and rebuilt in semi-detached style due to low demand for the housing in its original design. The new appearance of the area was considered to be satisfactory. Demolition and rebuilding apparently generated improvements. During an interview in February 2003 with Mr. Stephen Whitehead, a city architect, he inserted a sceptical view of the new houses in Craigmillar Castle Road. He comments that we will have to wait and see whether or not this process will really work out because problematic people are still residing within the area. He suspected that residents and their relationship with the housing could turn the housing estate in either a positive or negative direction. In general, location is one of crucial factors when making decision on the future of redundant housing estates. The impact of location and environmental conditions on the demand of housing is vitally important.

### **6.4.3.      *Cost of refurbishment and scale of the problems***

The cost of the refurbishment of Piershill Square was economically viable because the housing only required improvements for buildings and landscape. In contrast, Craigmillar Castle housing estate had greater problems related to social and economic deprivation. Large sums of money would be required for the redevelopment of the Craigmillar area, beyond refurbishing the buildings. It was realised that the magnitude of the housing problems in Craigmillar was greater than previously understood in the 1970s. During the 1990s, a different approach was employed to tackle housing problems in the Craigmillar area. The 1990s improvement programme for the Craigmillar area focuses on comprehensive socio-economic development such as land use, social and economic activity, and the rate of employment. The City Council has paid more attention to job creation and community services. If the area comprises workplaces, business services and recreation activities, it is likely improve social and economic situation. Thus housing problems would be alleviated.

### **6.4.4.      *Appearance of the buildings***

Piershill Square and Craigmillar Castle Estates had a traditional appearance – low-rise buildings with pitch roofs. Nonetheless, they were built with different building materials that seemed to have impact on the ways in which these buildings were assessed. Piershill Square benefited greatly from the obsolete buildings of the Old Cavalry Barracks. The existing military buildings provided MacRae with valuable stones, which were scarce at the time. The stones passed on their appearance to the new housing, thus harmonising it with the Old Town of Edinburgh which lent its historic characters to this 1930s housing estate. By the contrast, Craigmillar Castle housing estate, with its traditional form had potential to become a popular residential area, but large a proportion of the housing estate was demolished. The main reason was low demand for social housing in the area rather than quality of the buildings. Craigmillar Castle housing estate was built with concrete, which tends to appear dirty in high humidity, such as is found in Scotland. In the public eye, it had the image of a decaying housing estate, even though the structure of the houses was in good condition. In order to attract new residents, the City Council decided to demolish a large proportion of the

housing estate and built new houses with a different appearance. The finding of this case study is that the quality and appearance of buildings are not the most critical factor influencing the decisions taken on their futures. When considering housing problems from the viewpoint of urban planning, social and economic factors are given priority as a critical criterion.

#### **6.4.5.     *Value of Community***

The relationship between residents is a vital factor for creating a secure community in housing estates. Strong community values usually go hand in hand with low rate of social problems and high demand of housing estate. Accordingly, community value can have an impact on the decision making applied to changes in housing estates. As seen, residents of Piershill Square had established a strong community which the City Council also considered vitally important. On the contrary, Craigmillar Castle housing estate experienced disintegration of the community since the 1980. One cause of the disintegration was poor allocation policy. The Housing Department had used some particular housing estates to accommodate people with social and economic problems such as the homeless, antisocial people and drug addicts. When these problematic residents started causing problems, other residents was compelled to leave the housing estate. This policy had been applied to many social housing estates in Edinburgh. In most cases, it generated social disintegration. In practice, the concept of mixed classes of tenants did not produce the expected result in social housing. Instead of creating a balanced social profile, the concept led to 'class collisions', resulting in conflicts and instability in the community.

#### **6.4.6.     *Cultural Value***

The cultural value of these housing estates did not contribute to the decision on refurbishment of Piershill Square, nor did it affect the decisions on the demolition of Craigmillar Castle Road. The City Council was not legally obliged to consider the cultural value of these housing estates because they were not protected by the statutory listing of buildings of special interests. The cultural value therefore appears to be an irrelevant factor. From a viewpoint of the conservation of historic buildings, the result

of the 1995 modernisation programme did not affect the layout of the housing estate or the form of the buildings or the original façade. Therefore, the cultural significance of this housing estate is not compromised by the programme. This case study has shown that the modernisation of Piershill Square was carried out at minimum degree of alteration. The main characteristics of Piershill Square remain without much noticeable change. Even the housing was a listed building during the modernisation, the same degree of alteration would have been undertaken in order to keep the building in use. Piershill Square was listed in 2001, six years after its modernisation programme. Whether or not Piershill Square was a listed building, the housing was likely to be sustained because it was a desirable place in the housing market. Piershill Square was a valuable building in terms of quality of building, physical environment and visual townscape.

## 6.5. Conclusions

Piershill Square housing estate satisfied almost all of identified criteria by which the decision to refurbish unoccupied social housing may be made which are:

- Essential requirements
- Location and environmental condition
- Cost of refurbishment and scale of problem
- Appearance of the building
- Value of community

Craigmillar Castle Road, however, satisfied only essential requirements. The housing estate encountered severe social problems and was situated in a deprived location. Despite similar characteristics and being assessed by the same set of criteria, both housing estates were destined to different changes. This seems to be a result of the location and characteristics of residents and the existence of a strong sense of community.

The case study also demonstrates that change in the buildings and environment is as much a psychological demand as anything else in the case of Craigmillar Castle housing estate. A major psychological stimulation is needed in order to eradicate its former 'deprived image'. Only then can further development of the area be attractive to private sector and prospective residents. Comprehensive redevelopment has become a solution

for problematic social housing. For Craigmillar Castle Road, demolition of the 1930s housing was to initiate significant change to the image of the area. The demolition of Craigmillar Castle Road did not derive from a defective architectural character or technical problems with the building. However, it was part of an urban regeneration programme which aimed to revive the confidence of the population. It is psychological factors which are believed to contribute to a successful project.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Decisions-making Criteria for 20<sup>th</sup> century social Housing**

#### **7.1. A Summary**

The case studies have analysed the decision making processes employed by the Housing Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council between 1980 and 1997, in order to deal with increasing social problems in council housing estates. Both the City Council and Edinburgh public considered that many estates had declined into an irreversible state of decay. Hence, the primary goal was to eradicate the immediate causes of the problems before a positive use of the housing was to be considered. As the study has shown, the City council employed rather radical solutions, such as demolitions and comprehensive redevelopments of residential areas. Such approaches were adopted, because most of the solutions employed during the 1970s-80 had proved ineffectual. For example, garden clean-up, repainting the buildings, emergency repair and small scale refurbishment. In the early 1980s, the Housing Department reconsidered the causes of the problems and shifted its focus to the actual underlying causes of decline, namely, the social and economic structure of residential area, architectural characteristics and antisocial behaviour. Security oriented design was adopted as a core solution, which to a large extent conforming with the theory of Oscar Newman (Defensible Space, 1973). In 1983, the concept was applied to the refurbishment of West Granton scheme-B as an experimental programme, which was considered successful. A similar approach was applied to other problematic housing estates. Buildings were adapted and upgraded to meet this new standard of housing design. In some severely declining areas, the extent of changes were considerable, such as the comprehensive refurbishments of Craigmillar



and Niddrie. In West Granton and West Pilton, the City Council decided to undertake complete urban regeneration of the whole north Edinburgh and waterfront areas which has been an ongoing initiative for over 15 years and continues to the present day. In this context, the decision-making process is an activity that instigates area redevelopment and urban regeneration.

The new, open-ended strategy had a noticeable impact on residents. When making decisions on changes in housing areas, the Housing Committee simultaneously carried out multiple tasks such as economic assessment of housing improvement programmes, reallocation of current residents, and redevelopment of subsequent vacant sites after demolition. As seen in the case studies, the shortest decision making process was that of Tweedmuir and Teviotbank at Niddrie House, which took 6 years from 1985 to 1991. The decisions to demolish West Granton and Grampian and Cairngorm Houses, took 10 years from investigation of problems to actual decision to demolition. During this complex process, some of the social housing was still partially occupied, despite its appalling condition. The Housing Committee reduced the extent of management and maintenance work because of the reduced number of residents. The reallocation programme was only fully implemented when decisions to demolish had been officially confirmed. The delays in reaching final decisions caused psychological distress to the residents and promoted vandalism. This happened at Leith Fort, Niddrie House and West Granton-A. Nevertheless, it is critical to be aware that in practice, reallocation of residents requires considerable time in order to match residents to their desired areas. Such problems may not have occurred in other demolition programmes.

Although the Housing Committee is the decision maker that holds ultimate authority on the issue of social housing,<sup>1</sup> it was supported by other working parties, such as the Director of the Housing Department, Special Sub-committees, Scottish Homes, the Planning Department, and experts from the private sector. No working party had authority in the actual decision-making but rather provided expertise on specific aspects of housing problems. The Housing Department was responsible for reports on

---

<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, if the land is being sold, the decisions have to be rectified by the City Council and the Government.

structural integrity and building performances, which are normally undertaken by one of its units, namely, Building Design & Services. Financial and economic consideration is the responsibility of various departments of the City Council, such as City Development and Finance Committees. After the housing budget-cut in the 1970s, the City Council had to rely on Scottish Homes as a main source of funding for large-scale refurbishment. Scottish Homes was a national housing agency for Scotland and working in partnership with the Housing Committee. Scottish Homes, however, reserved full-authority on its own financial decisions on investments relating to 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing. Accordingly, it was an influential co-decision maker whose opinions could change the course of decision making. Sociocultural value involves matters of townscape, social development, and cultural heritage. These issues were normally dealt with by the Planning Department in conjunction with Building Control and the Social Work Department. Exactly how the Housing Committee established sociocultural value is unclear. The documents concerning this category of judgement appear almost statements of opinion rather than recommendations. According to the case studies, sociocultural issues were raised by groups of people who did not have authority in decision making, such as residents of social housings, a pressure group for heritage conservation, academics, and the public. Some were in the form of open letters to the Housing Committee. Many were in the form of public opinions presented in local and national newspapers. Often the most useful information and insight into the housing problems were contributed by residents. Nevertheless, the inclusion of sociocultural value was entirely dependent upon the Housing Committee's decision on whether to consider or dismiss any opinions or information.

There was considerable argument over the definition of sociocultural value of 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing and its inclusion in the decision making process. In 1992, a pressure group attempted to persuade the City Council to reverse the decision to demolish Grampian and Cairngorm Houses, a twin tower block in Leith Fort Housing estate. There was no legal obligation for the City Council to consider the tower blocks as architectural heritage because they were not protected by inclusion in the statutory list of building of special architectural interest. Although the Director of Historic

Scotland did not deny the architectural and historical values of the tower blocks, he decided not to designate the buildings for economic reasons.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the rationale behind changes in the man-made environment is an interplay of multiple reasoning methods. Concerning with 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing, the rationale involves three broad categories of reasons: essential requirements, economic consideration and sociocultural values. The thesis is concerned with the particular way in which these reasons contribute to the decision making. It focuses on sociocultural value in terms of its practical definition and its impact in practice. Each housing estate had specific problems, hence different degrees of intervention were required. In general, there were two options: conserve/ refurbish or demolish and build new houses. The Housing Committee, the final arbiter, decides on the optimum option or a combination of them. Understanding their functions sheds light on the rationale behind changes in redundant 20<sup>th</sup> century council housing.

## **7.2. A Change in the Strategy of Housing Improvement**

The case studies illustrated two periods in which the Housing Committee employed different strategies to deal with the decline in 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing. During the 1970s, the Housing Committee tried to create a good visual image for declining housing estates in order to draw people back into the estate and there were initiatives to encourage a strong community to be formed. Despite the further decline in many social housing areas, the City Council still attempted to solve housing problems in impoverished estates by means of landscape and building renovation projects. This gave immediate visual improvement and received positive responses from residents and others. Nonetheless, the results were short-lived. The case study demonstrates that the sustainability of a housing area requires improvements in socioeconomic structure such as employment, commercial activities, transportation, schools, shopping areas, leisure and sports facilities, in conjunction with an effective management plan. The landscape renovation project is an example of a misunderstanding of the nature of the problems.

Around the end of the 1980s, the Housing Committee approached housing problems from both urban planning and building design perspectives. Analysis of urban-scale problems was the first stage of sequential assessments by which causes of housing problems were identified. A result of this stage is generally known as location of the housing. If the location of a problematic residential area is to be redeveloped for other uses such as commercial or education, any existing ordinary housing will usually be demolished. Between 1980 and 1997 many residential areas in Edinburgh underwent large scale regeneration, for example Craigmillar Castle Road, West Pilton and West Granton areas. On the other hand, if the land use policy for an area remains unchanged, decisions on changes in existing housing will be made from building design perspective, which involves criteria stemming from three categories of reasons: structural integrity, economic practicality and sociocultural value.

This study focuses on the rationale behind decisions on changes to 20<sup>th</sup> century council housing from the building design perspective. Nevertheless, it is necessary to discuss the analysis of urban problems, namely evaluation of location. Evaluation of location is a complex process carried out by a group of experts. It provides specific context for decisions on the future of buildings. The following explanation will treat the urban-scale analysis as an initial stage of decision making in order to focus on building-scale decision making. Therefore, this simplified process consists of two distinguishable stages: evaluation of location and evaluation of the future of buildings.

### **7.3. The Evaluation of the Location**

The evaluation of location aims to determine the cause of housing problems in a broad context. It investigates the socioeconomic structure of the housing estate in question and its neighbouring areas. In Edinburgh, a business-management team of the Housing Department is responsible for the evaluation of housing areas. One evaluation technique is matrix scoring, in which each factor is given a score by experts from each field, such as Social Development, Economic and Business Development, Transportation, etc. Apparently, there is no universal formula for the scoring method. According to Peter McLean, a business manager of Edinburgh Housing Department, the

analysis of urban context is a series of assessments that have unique sequence, varying from case to case. The Housing Department refers to the result as 'socioeconomic indicators'. It represents the overall social and economic appraisal of a housing estate. Evaluation of location can also be carried out by means of visual inspection. The results, however, may not be as conclusive as the systematic evaluation method. Visual inspection of a housing estate give an impression of a location which is subject to the viewers personal standards. It is common practice for most prospective residents and home buyers. They normally observe signs of deprived environment and social problems such as 'decaying townscape', unoccupied buildings, vandalism, graffiti and litter on the street.<sup>1</sup> The results of visual inspections may contradict the resident's viewpoint and the socioeconomic indicators.

It is critically important to differentiate between socioeconomic indicators that are obtained via scientifically systematic evaluation and that results gained from visual inspection. Although public opinion can be an influential factor by which demand of housing in particular area is measured, its validity is limited. Public opinion can certainly be used as valid evidence in housing marketing research. Nonetheless, from the urban planning perspective, such information appears to be inaccurate and insufficient. Scottish Homes, for example, also relied on this type of information when making judgements on housing investments. Around 1991, its market research on Leith Fort's low-rise housing identified low-demand for housing in this area and proposed a comprehensive redevelopment of the estate, in other words, demolish all buildings and build new housing. In this case, the Housing Committee decided not to demolish because the Housing Department did not report any serious problems of social disintegration in the area. Besides, residents of Leith Fort low-rise housing expressed a desire to remain living in the area. Consequently, public perception of location seems to be have been an insufficient indicator by which decision on urban development can be justified. Misjudgement may have destructive effects on well-functioning housing estates, interruptions in social development and unnecessary housing redevelopment projects.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Coleman, A., (Utopia on Trial, 1986) for further information on the investigating method on housing problems

## 7.4. An Explanation of Decision-making Criteria

### 7.4.1. *Structural integrity*

Structural integrity remains an essential prerequisite for the continuing existence of 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing. As discussed in Chapter 1, it is a fundamental criterion for all buildings in use. Structure of the housing in question must conform to safety standards of civil engineering. Sound structural condition offers greater opportunities for reuse while deteriorated structure means that the housing is unsafe for users and requires repair or refurbishment. Structural condition determines options for the future of housing in question. With redundant 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing, it is critical to be aware that the structural condition of the housing may not be reflected on its appearance. Visual inspection is an insufficient means of structural investigation because of the nature of man-made materials and the complexities of the structural systems. The materials' appearance can often be misleading to visual inspectors. Character and colour of material are a poor indicator of structural conditions. For example, the external appearance of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses gave the image of decaying structure. The external-wall panels of grey precast-concrete were, in fact, decaying. According to the structural report by Ove Arup & Partners, the concrete panels and their fixings were the only parts that suffered from severe decays. The skeleton structure was an in-situ concrete column and beam system, which were still in good condition. But, deteriorating structure was wrongly used in public debate over the future of the buildings. Most passers-by presumed that the buildings should be demolished because of its structure defects. (See also, evaluation of location) Tweedmuir and Teviotbank Houses of Niddrie House underwent misappraisal, in which the tower blocks were claimed as having structural problems due to their appalling appearances. The structural conditions of both were proven to be in exceptionally good condition, when one of them failed to collapse during an attempted explosive demolition in 1989. The complexity of modern structure and materials requires scientific investigation and accurate assessments enables decision maker to exploit the structure to its full potential. The case study found instances of buildings of sound structure demolished while buildings that had structural failure were refurbished.



Structural integrity is an important factor in establishing the options for the future viability of 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing.

#### *7.4.2. Sociocultural value*

Since the early 1980s, the Housing Committee re-emphasised the aim of sustaining, consolidating or recreating 'community' in problematic estates. As seen, social problems had caused disintegration of community in each of the case studies. The objectives were to eradicate the causes of the problems and to recreate community value. Most of the decisions conform to these objectives. For example, when Piershill Square Tenants Association submitted a letter to the Housing Committee concerning allocation of homeless and antisocial residents to the estate, the Housing Committee immediately reallocated those people to other areas and resolved that such allocation policies were to be abandoned in order to prevent disintegration of community in Piershill Square. The demolition of Grampian and Cairngorm Houses was an extreme measure taken in regard to the security and stability of the community. These twin tower blocks had witnessed social problems for nearly the whole 30 years of their existence. Such negative experiences were imprinted on the public memory and the very existence of the tower blocks was completely rejected by the public, including residents in the neighbourhood. A reason given for demolition was simply hatred of the buildings. It appears that security and stability of the community was valued more highly than architectural merits and opportunity to reuse the buildings.

Stability and security in a community can be established among residents, regardless of the quality of the buildings. The case studies have demonstrated that a strong relationship among residents reflects community value. Strong community existed in many problematic housing estates, even though they had serious social problems, substandard building performance and facilities, and low economic profile. For example residents of Tweedmuir and Teviotbank Houses had their community in which they helped one another when problems occurred in the buildings. Vandalism and antisocial behaviour was by non-residents. As seen, a resident group at Tweedmuir House started the Niddrie House Rehabilitation and Planning Group (NHRPG). Similar initiatives were launched at Leith Fort low-rise and at West Granton-A. Even though

high-rise may not be an ideal form of residential buildings, residents were somehow able to establish a sense of community. It is also evident that the buildings characters affected quality of life but they did not generate social problems. The situation in Niddrie House in 2001 supports this view. Niddrie House comprises two housing areas owned by the City Council and by Hunter Hall Housing Co-operative. As seen in the case study, the privately managed housing area was problem-free while the Council-owned housing had serious social problems like those of high-rise housing with antisocial residents. This suggests that behaviour of residents is a pivotal factor of strong community value and subsequently good image of housing area. The idea was shared by the public at large, local politicians, and Scottish Homes, the grant holder during the 1990s. Residents and local housing officers knew that all forms of housing may encounter serious problems if they accommodate antisocial people. In practice, recognition of community value can only be realised through formal expressions of resident's opinions, in written forms through formal meetings, or questionnaire surveys. Without concrete evidence, community value may be presumed to be absent. Accordingly, the perception of residents is the mechanism that dictates the image of good buildings. Buildings of the same design therefore enjoy different fortunes depending on the perception of residents.

The visual appearance of 20<sup>th</sup> century social housings is an subjective factor for decision making. It is a psychological factor that affects the way residents and owners perceive the buildings. Modern housing, particularly high-rise buildings, represents poverty, social problems and deprived areas. Building materials of the earlier period have become comparatively substandard. Pure geometrical forms were perceived as ugly and inhuman. Undesirable appearance had an impact not only on the confidence of residents, but also their quality of life. The case study of Niddrie House shows that residents in Niddrie experienced difficulty in procuring property insurance in the 1980s because the area was perceived as a high risk for vandalism and crimes. Changing the image was considered necessary and the appearance was transformed by the addition of pitched roofs. Viewed in this way, Tweedmuir and Teviotbank House were demolished because their appearance could not be transformed in terms of appearance and height of the buildings. The tower blocks were seen as intruders in a low-rise housing area.

Nevertheless, public rejection of the 'Modern' appearance is not conclusive. The case study of Craigmillar housing estate demonstrated that, social housing of traditional design could also be demolished if there was no demand to live in the area. The traditional 1930s social houses were demolished and replaced with semi-detached houses contemporary appearance. The new houses were colourful with modern elements such as glazed porticos. (See chapter 6) The new buildings were calculated to attract new residents to the area so that a sense of community might eventually be established.

In conjunction with problematic residents, disintegration of community is a result of both residents and buildings. Nonetheless, it is unclear how these two components interrelate. Evidence from the case studies suggests that neither buildings nor residents can be held fully responsible for problems. From a social viewpoint, the solution is to arrange buildings that are compatible to residents or vice versa. The decision to demolish buildings or to evict problematic residents, or a combination of both would appear to be justified insofar as such decisions would strengthen community values within the housing estates.

Compatibility of buildings and residents is a criterion which matches the functional performance of the buildings to the social demands of residents. From a technical viewpoint, standard functional performance for the 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing involves sanitary system, natural light, ventilation, heat insulation and acoustic insulation. In addition, the case studies illustrate that it is necessary to consider the compatibility of building characteristics with the residents' lifestyles. Compatibility involves issues such as social behaviour, economic status, and types of tenures. In the case studies, most social housing estates that were demolished were considered as having functional performances incompatible with the resident's life style. For example West Granton-A and all high rise housing. The City Council and Scottish Homes were inclined to demolish socially-incompatible buildings. In its letter concerning this issue, Scottish Homes expressed clearly that high rise buildings were an inappropriate form of mass-housing and refused to provide financial support for any project involving high rise.

### 7.4.3. *Economic practicality*

A constant factor in any decision about the future of buildings is economic. In practice, it is common to encounter substandard performance or technical problem in all types of building, particularly residential buildings, because of the advancement in technology which leading to higher building standards. It would be economically impractical for all obsolete buildings were to be discarded without upgrading and improving their structure and social compatibility. Accordingly, economic practicality is particularly important in decision making because theoretically it is possible to solve almost every technical problem relating to 20<sup>th</sup> century residential buildings. Technology can provide efficient facilities and a high of standard functional performance and even structural integrity can be restored. Any buildings can be improved to current standards. Nonetheless, not all solutions are economically viable. Due to restricted resources, the City of Edinburgh Council had to ensure that any decisions on the future of 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing were taken with reasoned justification and economic practicality. The interplay between economic practicality and structural and sociocultural reasons generates sub-criteria by which changes in buildings can be assessed objectively and by which the future of social housing is decided. The economic practicality of structural integrity and compatible functional performances are separate issues. It is critical to distinguish between these two requirements because, in the arguments for and against the reuse of 20<sup>th</sup> century social buildings, they sometimes appear to contradict each other, simply because sturdy buildings may have obsolete functional performance.

The running cost and maintenance of buildings is a criterion by which compatibility of buildings functional performance and resident's economic status is assessed. This is specifically important for affordable social mass housing which aims to serve low-income residents. As seen in the case studies, high-rise building is not a compatible form of low-income housing because the building demands a high degree of maintenance and services such as lifts, high use of electricity and expensive plumbing systems, and full-time caretakers. They thus require a larger maintenance budget than low-rise housing while the City council preferred housing with lowest-operating cost.

Adaptability of the structure is a criterion that assesses economic practicality in the decision to improve structural integrity. The structure of a building usually has a certain degree of adaptability which allows it to accommodate new uses. From the structural viewpoint, if the improvement of the building's functional performance does not interfere with the structural stability, there is no reason for discarding it. Tweedmuir and Teviotbank Houses were demolished as a consequence of their rigid structure. These two tower blocks were considered socially incompatible with the residents so that alterations were required. However, it would have been very expensive to adapt the internal space to accommodate new uses because the structure of these tower blocks used load-bearing walls. Besides, the stability of the structure would have been compromised if internal structural components had been altered. Adaptability also means that improvement in structure must be achievable at reasonable cost. West Granton Scheme-A was demolished because it required extensive refurbishment and structural alteration in order to eliminate defective design features. Although it would have been possible to carry out the alterations, the estimated cost was £15 million, which was extremely high in 1988. As a result, the buildings were considered to be of low-adaptability and demolished. Therefore, the adaptability of the building's structure is fundamental in deciding its future.

To conclude, the interplay between economic practicality and structural and sociocultural reasons generates sub-criteria for changes to 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing:

- Adaptability of the building's structure
- Compatibility of the buildings in terms of:
  - Functional performance and residents' demands
  - Buildings characters and social economic behaviours of residents
  - Operational cost of buildings and economic status of residents

#### **7.4.4. *Political Factors***

Political factors govern the dynamic of decision making. Among four case studies, there are a number of similar problems which were treated with different solutions. The solutions, however, were based on the same criterion, namely, compatibility of the buildings and residents. As a criterion, compatibility appears to have dynamic logic. It

can be assessed either from the building centre or human centre perspective. Validity of the assessment depends on the perspective of the decision maker. In the context of 20<sup>th</sup> century social housing, this is official housing policy. The Housing Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council considered social-housing problem from a human-centre perspective. Analysis of housing problems and solutions were directed by benefit of residents and Edinburgh people. Edinburgh's council housing policy aimed to fulfil simultaneously two objectives: 1) to address social problems in social housing estates and 2) to ensure that affordable housing is available to people in economic difficulty. In order to accommodate problematic residents or people with economic difficulty, the most compatible form of accommodation must be provided even though it is arguable that social problem may reoccur because of these people. Nevertheless, the second objective is a political obligation that obliges the City Council to give prime priority to residents rather than buildings. To understand the political position is to understand the way in which the decision maker perceives the core issues of each problem and the way options of decision are selected in order to solve housing problems. This political position is the logical mechanism that explains why problematic housings were demolished.

As it is clear that, at present, arguments driven by cultural perspectives alone are insufficient to support decisions to conserve 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage. Unlike their older counterparts, survival of 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage does not seem to benefit from a general consensus on special cultural merits. With an aim of protecting heritage of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, UNESCO ICOMOS and DoCoMoMo, in collaboration with UNESCO world heritage centre, have requested their member countries "*to explore the ways and means to develop methodologies for a critical process for the analysis and assessment of the significance of the twentieth-century heritage in its various forms and in relation to the social, political, economic and cultural context.*"<sup>1</sup> In practice, this is a recognition of vital relationship between the existence of 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings and their contemporary

---

<sup>1</sup> Finnish National Committee of ICOMOS, 1995, *Seminar on the 20<sup>th</sup> century Heritage*. International Seminar held in Helsinki, Finland, 18-19 June 1995. Database online. Available at [http://www.international.icomos.org/20th\\_heritage/helsinki\\_1995.htm](http://www.international.icomos.org/20th_heritage/helsinki_1995.htm)



context. Without this relationship, their existence would appear meaningless and the conservation efforts are likely to be impractical.

The role of ordinary 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings is to accommodate everyday demands. It is this very essential role that makes their existence meaningful in the contemporary context. While these buildings accumulate greater heritage status, conservation efforts should be made to sustain this vital relationship. Consequently, a practical and sustainable protection of this potential 20<sup>th</sup> century heritage may be achieved.

## References

Balchin, Paul, and Maureen Rhoden, ed. 1998. *Housing, the essential foundation*, London, Routledge,

Barbey, Gilles and Michel Clivaz. 1994. A possible selection of Criteria for safeguarding the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Built Heritage. Proceeding of Third International Conference held in Mies Van de Rohe Foundation, Barcelona 16 Sept – 19 Sept 1994, DOCOMOMO Iberian and DOCOMOMO International.

Feilden, Bernard Melchoir. 1982, *Conservation of Historic Buildings*, Suffolk, St Edmundsbury Press Co.Ltd.

Bell, Dorothy. 1997. *The historic Scotland guide to international conservation charters*, Historic Scotland technical advice note No. 8. Edinburgh, Historic Scotland,

City Architect, Edinburgh. 1969. Architectural drawing, layout of Niddrie House, Edinburgh City Archive

Coleman, Alice. 1985. *Utopia on trial: vision and reality in planned housing*, London, Shipman.

Conversations with Stephen Whitehead, a City architect, Building Design Service, the Housing Department, 23, Waterloo Place Edinburgh, February, 2003

Conversations with Neil Alexander, a record officer, Record Office, the Housing Department, 23, Waterloo Place Edinburgh, February, 2003

De la Torre, Marta and Randy Mason. 1999. Economics and Heritage, paper presented as part of "Culture, Environment and Heritage" at the US ICOMOS International Symposium, Washington DC, April 1999. Database online. Available at <http://www.icomos.org/usicomos/Symposium/SYMP99/delatorre.htm>

De Marco, Marina and Carmelo Torre. 1999. Refurbishment and Conservation in Sustainable Renewal of Architectural and Urban Heritage, paper presented as part of "Conceptual and Technological Questions, Sharing Knowledge on Sustainable Buildings" at the Mediterranean Conference, Bari, December 16-17, 1999. Database online. Available at <http://www.iris.ba.cnr.it/sksb/PAPERS/04-56o.pdf>, Last update: December 3, 1999

Director of Housing. 1974. Report on 'Extraordinary Expenditure- Piershill Square and Restalig Road, Courtyard re-surfacing', dated 5 March 1974, submitted to the Housing Committee – Management Sub-committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

Director of Housing. 1976. Report on Flues for gas heating appliances; West Granton Terrace, Place and Crescent, dated 15 June 1976, submitted to the Housing Committee Management Sub-Committee., Edinburgh City Archive.

Director of Housing and Cleansing. 1976. Joint-Report on West Granton Estate, Multi Storey Street, dated 15 June 1976, Housing Committee Management Sub-Committee, Edinburgh City Archive.

Director of Housing. 1991. Report on "Cairngorm House Flooding: Tenants' delegation", dated 3 December 1991, submitted to the Housing Committee, Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

DoCoMoMo Scottish national Group, *Report on Leith Fort, January 1991*, Miles Glendinning's personal collection.

Evening News and Dispatch (Edinburgh). Undated. "West Pilton Temporary Housing redevelopment", Housing Press cutting collection Edinburgh Central City Library, Edinburgh Room.

Evening News and Dispatch (Edinburgh). 9 April, 1965. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 23 March 1967. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 25 September 1969. 'Don't Let Our Homes Turn to Slums', Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 1 November 1972. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 2 April 1974, reported by Muriel Poole. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 24 January 1978. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central City Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 27 May 1983, reported by Ken Smart, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library

Evening News (Edinburgh), 8 June 1984. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 11 June 1985. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library

Evening News (Edinburgh), 12 August 1986. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 11 January 1988. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 30 May 1989. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library

Evening News (Edinburgh). 9 September 1991. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 7 March 1992. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 25 September 1992. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 13 January 1993. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library

Evening News (Edinburgh). 16 June 1993, reported by Ken Smart. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central City Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh). 24 January 1995, reported by Jack Mathieson. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central City Library.

Finnish National Committee of ICOMOS. 1995. "Conclusions to the Seminar on the 20<sup>th</sup> century Heritage". at ICOMOS seminar on 20<sup>th</sup> Heritage in corporation with UNESCO (WHC) and ICCROM, Helsinki, Finland 18-19 June 1995. Database online available at [http://www.international.icomos.org/20th\\_heritage/helsinki\\_1995.htm](http://www.international.icomos.org/20th_heritage/helsinki_1995.htm)

Frew John. 1991. Ebenezer MacRae and reformed tenement design 1930-1940, St Andrews Studies 11, University of St. Andrews.

Glendinning, Miles and Stefan Muthesius. 1994. *Tower block: modern public housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland*, New Haven; London: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press.

Glendinning Miles. "Leith Fort" (A lecture note of Housing Seminar, Housing Studies 1, delivered at Edinburgh College of Art /Heriot-Watt University on 19 November 1992, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Graham, Eugene Roy. 2001. Survey letter to Presidents of national and International Scientific committees, presented as part of the seminar and conferences related to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century architecture at ICOMOS seminar on 20<sup>th</sup> Heritage in corporation with

UNESCO (WHC) and ICCROM, Helsinki, Finland 18-19 June 1995. Database online available at [http://www.international.icomos.org/20th\\_heritage/helsinki\\_1995.htm](http://www.international.icomos.org/20th_heritage/helsinki_1995.htm)

Historic Scotland. 1998. *Memorandum of guidance on listed buildings and conservation area*, Edinburgh, HMSO.

Hurd, Robert. 1930. 'Clearing the Slum of Edinburgh', the Architectural Journal, 26 March 1930.

MacRae, Ebenezer James. 1934. *Note on the rehousing of the dispossessed in Edinburgh*, Scottish National Housing and Town Planning Committee, Acc. Nos. G82109, The Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central City Library

MacRae, Ebenezer James. 1934, Notes on General Impressions of Continental Housing, Memorandum on the housing problems in Scotland, November 1934, q.YHD 7335 Accession G 18032, photocopied, The Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central City Library

MacRae, Ebenezer James. Some interesting examples of recent work from the city's architectural department. Official Architect, September 1941. Edinburgh, P 427-429.

Macdonald, Angus John. 2001. *Structure and Architecture*, Architectural Press, Oxford.

Mason, Randall. 1996. Economics and Heritage Conservation: Concepts, Values and Agendas for Research. In *The Economics and Heritage Conservation: Proceedings of a meeting organised by Getty Conservation Institute*, December 1998. Available at [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/econrpt.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/econrpt.pdf).

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Committee-Improvement Sub-committee. 1958. The Edinburgh District Council, 10 June 1958. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee. 1963. The Edinburgh District Council, 16 June 1963. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Education, Civic Amenities, Housing and Planning Committee Joint sub committee. 1966. The Edinburgh District Council, 14 January 1966. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee. 1983. The Edinburgh District Council, 12 July 1983. Edinburgh city archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing committee. 1966. The Edinburgh District Council, 13 December 1966. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee. 1964. "West Pilton Temporary Housing Redevelopment", The Edinburgh District Council, 10 November 1964. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee. 1983. The Edinburgh District Council, 22 November 1983. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee. 1990. The Edinburgh District Council, 2 October 1990. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee. 1992. The Edinburgh District Council, 2 June 1992. Edinburgh City Archive.

Murie, Alan, Sally Wainwright and Keith Anderson. 1994. *Empty public sector dwellings in Scotland*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Office Central Research Unit, photocopied.

Newman, Oscar. 1972. *Defensible space: crime prevention through urban design*, Macmillan, New York.

Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group, 1988, Feasibility study of Tweedmuir and Teviotbank Houses, submitted to the Housing Committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

Ove Arup & Partners Scotland, 1986, Report on '*Cairngorm and Grampian Houses; Investigation into condition of external panels and their fixings*', Job nos.15296. The Housing Department, Edinburgh District Council.

Pearce, David, 1989, *Conservation Today*, London, Routledge

Poyner, Barry and Barry Webb. 1991. *Crime Free Housing*, Oxford, Butterworth Architecture.

Review of Housing Leith Fort Edinburgh. 1961. Architectural Review Vol.129 January-June 1961, pp32-33

Review of FORTH VIEW housing at Leith Fort Edinburgh. 1965. Architectural Review, Vol. 137 January -June 1965, pp. 218-223, photograph by S.G. Jackman

Rudin, David and Nicholas Falk. 1999. *Building the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Home, the sustainable urban neighbourhood*, Oxford, Architectural Press.

Scotsman Weekly (Edinburgh). 13 May 1939. reported by W.B.E. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Scotsman Weekly (Edinburgh). 19 January 1951. by Sir John Falconer, former Lord Provost of Edinburgh. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Scotsman (Edinburgh). 10 July 1965, report by Clark Gillian. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.



Scotsman (Edinburgh), 24 February 1970, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Scotsman (Edinburgh), 13 October 1982, Housing Press cutting Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Scotsman (Edinburgh). 25 April 1984, reported by Melanie Reid. Housing Press cutting collection, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central City Library

Scotsman (Edinburgh). 25 April 1984, reported by Simon Bain. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central City Library.

Scotsman (Edinburgh). 30 October 1984. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Scotsman (Edinburgh). 12 February 1992. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Scotsman (Edinburgh). 25 February 1992, Point of View, a letter from Emma Crawford. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Scotsman (Edinburgh). 19 September 1994, Interview by Nicola Barry. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library

Special representatives, CRIT'- 'Leith Fort Housing Competition Edinburgh', The Builder, 7 February 1958, P 261.

Sunday Mail (Edinburgh). 16 February 1992. 'You're Tower Blockhead!', reported by John Finlayson. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Vago, Pierre. 1990. The Meaning of Modern Movement for Contemporary Architecture. Proceeding of the Second International Conference held at Bauhaus Dessau, 16 -19 September 1992

Vepoest, Luc. Moderate modernism: the conservation of an architectural concept versus the restoration of its technology. Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990, pp.90-92.

Wedeburnn Ola. Aspect of Preservation of the early modern movement in Denmark- Technological aspects and regional expression. In *The Universality & Heterogeneity*: Proceeding of the Fourth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Bratislava Slovakia 18-20 September 1996, pp.133-135.

Worsdall, Frank. 1991. *The Glasgow tenement : a way of life ; a social, historical and architectural study*, Edinburgh, Chambers.

## Bibliography

Allan, John. 1998. MoMo's Second Chance-the revaluation of Urban Housing. In *the vision & reality, social aspect of architecture and urban planning in the modern movement*: Proceeding of the Fifth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Sweden, 16-18 September 1998.

Apell, Robert. 1990. The Charter of Venice and the Conservation of the monument of the modern movement. Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990. DoCoMoMo International.

Beckmann, Paul. 1994, *Structural Aspect of Building Conservation*, Paston Press Ltd., McGrew-Hill International Ltd., London.

Bernstein, Daniel, et al. 1996. Learning architecture through MoMo rehabilitation Studies. In *The Universal and Heterogeneity*: Proceeding of the Fourth International Conference held in Bratislava-Silac, Slovakia 18 Sept – 20 Sept 1996. DOCOMOMO Slovakia (organiser).

Brierley, Edwin S. 1997. Park Hill Sheffield (Lynn& Smith, 2953-60): the Social impact of a deck-housing prototype. DOCOMOMO Journal March 1997 vol. 16: 44-47. ISSN: 1380-3204.

Cantacuzino, Sherban. Principle of Protection for the Architecture of Modern Movement. In the Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990.

Croft, Catherine. Preserving Modern Housing: the English Experience. In *the Universality & Heterogeneity*. Proceeding of the Fourth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Bratislava Slovakia 18-20 September 1996, pp196-200.

De Jonge, Wessel. Contemporary requirement and the conservation of typical technology of the modern movement. Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990, pp. 84-89.

\_\_\_\_\_, Bergpolderflat, Too fit to survive. Proceeding of the second International Conference DoCoMoMo held at Bauhaus in Dessau Germany 16-19 september 1992, pp. 198-203.

\_\_\_\_\_, Towards a worldwide network. In *The Universality & Heterogeneity*. Proceeding of the Fourth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Bratislava Slovakia 18-20 September 1996, 166-169.

Duncan, T.L.C. with Cowan R.H. 1976. *Housing action Area in Scotland*, (research paper 3 for Housing Improvement Policies in Scotland) Glasgow, The Planning Exchange

Edinburgh City Council, Capital Tenant, The City of Edinburgh Council Housing Magazine, Issue 7 Winter 1997/1998.

Feilden, Bernard Melchoir. 1979. *An Introduction to Conservation of Cultural Property*: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Pamphlet.

Glendinning, Miles, Ronald MacInnes and Aoghus MacKechnie, ed. 1996. *A history of Scottish Architecture from the Renaissance to the present day*. Edinburgh, the Edinburgh University Press.

\_\_\_\_\_, Megastructure and Genius Loci: the architecture of Cumbernauld New Town. In *The Universality & Heterogeneity*: Proceeding of the Fourth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Bratislava Slovakia 18-20 September 1996, pp. 123-127.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Watter Dianne, ed. 1999. *Home Builders: Mactaggart & Mickel and the Scottish house building industry*, Edinburgh, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland (RCAHMS)

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. 1997. *Rebuilding Scotland: the postwar vision 1945-1975*, Edinburgh, Tuckwell Press Ltd.

Grementieri, Fafio. Towards a reintegration of MoMo Architectural Culture. In *The Universality & Heterogeneity*: Proceeding of the Fourth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Bratislava Slovakia 18-20 September 1996, pp.41-44.

Henket, Hubert-Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Architecture requires a new conservation policy and approach. Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990.

Heynen, Hilde, The issue of transitoriness in modern architecture. Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990.

Highcock, Chris. 1997. A community Economic Development Case-Study examining a new model for successful community shops: Community Shop How to make your community shop succeed. Edinburgh, Community Enterprise Limited.

Horsey, Miles. 1990. *Tenements & Towers: Glasgow working-class housing 1890-1990*, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland/HMSO, Edinburgh, aka Miles Glendinning

Lozano, Eduardo E. 1990. *Community design and the culture of cities: the crossroad and the wall*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Iamandi, Cristina. The should not of conservation doctrine on the legitimacy of reconstruction of MoMo architecture. In *The vision & reality, social aspect of*

*architecture and urban planning in the modern movement*. Proceeding of the Fifth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Sweden, 16-18 September 1998.

Macdonald, Susan. ed. 1996. *Modern matter, Principle and practice in conserving recent architecture*, Dorset, Donhead Publishing.

\_\_\_\_\_. Technical response to typical conservation problems for architecture in England after the war-current research and case studies from English Heritage. In *The Universality & Heterogeneity*: Proceeding of the Fourth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Bratislava Slovakia 18-20 September 1996, pp.178-182.

MacInnes, Ranald, Miles Glendinning and Aoghus MacKechnie. 1999. *Building a Nation, the Story of Scotland Architecture*, Edinburgh, Cannongate Books Limited

Mill, Edward. 1994. *Building Maintenance and Preservation Guide for Design and Management*, 2<sup>nd</sup> revised edition, Oxford, Butterworth Architecture.

Montenero, Alessandra. Building maintenance: architectural legislative and financial aspect: the non protection of modern architecture. Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990, pp.250-253.

Oechslin, Werner, Vision: an empty expression or a designed future? For a return to the task and goals of architecture. In *The vision & reality, social aspect of architecture and urban planning in the modern movement*: Proceeding of the Fifth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Sweden, 16-18 September 1998, pp. 21-23.

Pawley, Martin. A modern morituri. In the Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990, pp.64-67.

Rebel, Ben. The essence of the modern movement. Proceeding of the second International Conference DoCoMoMo held at Bauhaus in Dessau Germany 16-19 September 1992, pp. 54-58.

Scalbert, Irene. The value of Objectivity. In *The vision & reality, social aspect of architecture and urban planning in the modern movement*: Proceeding of the Fifth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Sweden, 16-18 September 1998, pp. 263-264.

Sharp, Dennis. Modern architecture and its conservation. Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990, p. 55.

Stratton, Michael. ed. 1997. *Structure and Style, conservaing the 20<sup>th</sup> Century architecture*, London, E & FN Spon.

Scottish Special Housing Association. 1984. *A chronicle of forty years 1937-1977*, Edinburgh, Scottish Special Housing Association. (Prepared from material researched by David H. Halley)

Scottish Homes, *Assessing the Impact of tenure diversification: the case of Niddrie, Edinburgh*, in *Precis* Nos. 108. Database online available at <http://www.scot-homes.gov.uk>

Scottish Homes, *Written Housing Allocation Policies and social inclusion*. in *Precis* Nos. 110. Database online available at <http://www.scot-homes.gov.uk>

Tuominen, Laura. Conserving the 20<sup>th</sup> Century architectural heritage: Approach to a common problem. Proceeding of the second International Conference DoCoMoMo held at Bauhaus in Dessau Germany 16-19 September 1992, pp. 59-63.

Teague, Alexandra. Architecture, conservation, identification: A case for the recent, a case for the ordinary. In *The vision & reality, social aspect of architecture and urban planning in the modern movement*: Proceeding of the Fifth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Sweden, 16-18 September 1998.

Urbanik, Jadwiga. Towards functional dwelling; success and failure. Proceeding of the second International Conference DoCoMoMo held at Bauhaus in Dessau Germany 16-19 September 1992, pp. 36-41.

White, L.E. 1946. *Tenement Town*, London, Jason Press.

Whitham, David. Renewal rejection and restitution: 40 years of comprehensive development in the Gorbals. In *The vision & reality, social aspect of architecture and urban planning in the modern movement*: Proceeding of the Fifth International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Sweden, 16-18 September 1998, pp. 113-118.

Wirth, Hermann. Conservation of historic buildings from the new architecture of the 1920s. Proceeding of the First International DoCoMoMo Conference held in Eindhoven, 12-15 September 1990, pp. 108-111.

## Primary Sources

### Chapter 3

Architectural drawings, West Pilton Housing area, 1965, Edinburgh City Archive

Architectural Drawings, West Granton Scheme-A, date of warrant 20 November 1964, Record Office, Housing Department, Edinburgh

Conversations in October 2002 with Neil Alexandra, Record Office, Housing Department, Edinburgh.

Director of Housing, 1988, Report on 'West Granton Priority Estate Initiative', dated 20 September 1988, submitted to the Housing Committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

Director of Housing, 1989, Report on 'North Edinburgh Area Renewal', dated 12 September 1989, submitted to Housing Committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

Director of Housing, 1989, Report on 'Housing: A Four Year Strategy', dated 12 September 1989, submitted to the Housing Committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee, 1962, The Edinburgh District Council, 6 November 1962. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee, 1962, The Edinburgh District Council, 13 November 1962. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee - Special sub-committee on Housing Policy, 1963, The Edinburgh District Council, 17 June 1963, Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing committee, 1963, The Edinburgh district council, 16 July 1963. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee - General Purpose Sub-committee, 1984, The Edinburgh District Council, 28 February 1984, Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee, 1988, The Edinburgh District Council, 20 September 1988, Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing committee - Management Sub-Committee, 1989, The Edinburgh District Council, 18 April 1989, Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee - Management Sub-Committee, 1989, The Edinburgh District Council, 14 November 1989. Edinburgh City Archive.

Minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee, 1994, The Edinburgh District Council, 11 October 1994, Edinburgh City Archive.



Evening News (Edinburgh), 1 September 1993, reported by Ken Smart, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh Central City Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 16 September 1981, Housing Press cutting collection, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 6 October 1981, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 29 August 1987, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

## Chapter 4

Conversation with Stuart Avinau, Local Housing Area Office for Niddrie, in October 2001

Telephone conversation with Peter Strong, manager, Local Housing Area Office for Niddrie, in October 2001

Telephone conversation with Nile Istephan: Scottish Homes, in October 2001

Leslie Andrew, 1988, a letter dated 11 August 1988 from Mr Andrew Leslie, Assistant Director-Scotland of the Housing Corporation, to Mr Eric McGovern, chairman Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group, an attachment to the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee. Edinburgh City Archive

McGovern Eric, 1988, a letter dated 9 September 1988 from Mr. Eric McGovern, Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group to J. M. Wilson, the Director of Housing, Minute of Meeting of Housing committee, Edinburgh City Archive

Saltire Society, 2000, Saltire Awards for Housing Design 1937-1997, Edinburgh, pamphlet.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 12 June 1985. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 23 April 1986, reported by Sandy Braid. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 15 November 1989. Housing Press cutting. Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.  
Sunday Herald Magazine (Edinburrgh), 17 October 1999 reported by Gibb Eddie.

Scotsman (Edinburgh), 14 November 1989. Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

## **Chapter 5**

Martin James Leslie, The assessor's report Leith Fort Hosing Competition results, The Architectural Journal, February 6 1958. 205-216

Evening News (Edinburgh), 14 September 1989, 'Life in a high-rise horror – shock trip to dirt and despair', reported by Barbie Dutter, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

## **Chapter 6**

Evening News (Edinburgh), 16 June 1938, 'Housing Progress; tour of the City's latest schemes'. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library

Evening News (Edinburgh), 23 October 1969, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

Evening News (Edinburgh), 3 September 1983, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library

## References of Illustrations

### Chapter 3

[3-1] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee; Special Subcommittee on Housing Policy held on 6 November 1962,. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-2] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 17 June 1963. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-3] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee; Special Subcommittee on Housing Policy held on 13 November 1962. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-4] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 16 July 1963. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-5] Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland, Photograph of Muirhouse residential general view in 1991, Edinburgh.

[3-6], [3-7] and [3-8], Reprinted with permission from Neil Alexander, Record Office, Housing Department, Edinburgh City Council.

[3-9] Reprinted with permission from Housing Collection Picture Library, Scottish Life Archive, National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.

[3-10], [3-11], [3-12], [3-13], Reprinted with permission from Neil Alexander, Record Office, Housing Department, Edinburgh City Council.

[3-14] and [3-15] Reprinted with permission from Neil Alexander, Record Office, Housing Department, Edinburgh City Council.

[3-16] Reprinted from, Digimap, EDINA. Database online available at the Edinburgh University Data Library.

[3-17] Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland, Photographs of West Granton View, in 1991, Edinburgh.

[3-18] Architectural drawings, West Pilton Housing area, 1965, Edinburgh City Archive

[3-19] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 12 October 1971. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-20] and [3-21] reprinted with permission from Neil Alexander, Record Office, Housing Department, Edinburgh City Council.

[3-22] Reprinted from Report by Director of Housing, Flues for gas heating appliances; West Granton Terrace, Place and Crescent, dated 15 June 1976, Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-23] Reprinted from Joint-Report by Director of Housing and Cleansing, West Granton Estate, Multi Storey Street, dated 15 June 1976, Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-24] and [3-25] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 16 June 1993, reported by Ken Smart. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[3-26] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 1 September 1993, reported by Ken Smart. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[3-27] and [3-28] Reprinted from, Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 16 September 1981. Housing Press cutting Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[3-29] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 6 October 1981. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library

[3-30] Reprinted from the Scotsman (Edinburgh) dated 25 April 1984, the left section reported by Melanie Reid and the right section reported by Simon Bain. Housing Press cutting Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[3-30] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 12 July 1983. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-31] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 29 August 1987, Housing Press cutting collection Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[3-32] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing committee held on 22 November 1983. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-33] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing committee: General Purpose sub- committee, held on 28 February 1984. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh city archive.

[3-34] Reprinted from, Report on West Granton Priority Estate Initiative, by the Director of Housing, dated 20 September 1988. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-35] Reprinted from, Report on West Granton Priority Estate Initiative, by the Director of Housing, dated 20 September 1988. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-36] Reprinted with permission from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of West Granton Place in 1991, Edinburgh.

[3-37] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee: Management Sub-Committee held on 18 April 1989. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-38] and [3-39] Reprinted from Report on North Edinburgh Area Renewal by Director of Housing, dated 12 September 1989, Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-40] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 11 October 1994. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[3-41] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 24 January 1995, reported by Jack Mathieson. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room. Edinburgh Central City Library.

## Chapter 4

[4-1] Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of an aerial view of Niddrie House and Craigmillar area in 1989, Edinburgh.

[4-2] Reprinted from, Digimap, EDINA. Database online available at the Edinburgh University Data Library.

[4-3] left Reprinted with permission from a photograph taken by Neil Alexander, Record office, Housing Department, 1989. Edinburgh Housing Department.

[4-3] right Reprinted from, Macdonald, A. J. 1989. *Above Edinburgh and South-East Scotland*, Mainstream, Edinburgh. 168.

[4-4] Reprinted from the Feasibility study of Tweedmuir and Teviotbank Houses prepared by Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group, dated July 1989. Edinburgh City Archive.

[4-5] Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of Tweedmuir and Teviotbank Houses viewed from Niddrie House Drive, in 1989, Edinburgh.

[4-6] Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of an aerial view of Tweedmuir and Teviotbank Houses, in 1989, Edinburgh.

[4-7] Reprinted from Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of Niddrie House Garden, in 1989, Edinburgh.

[4-8] Reprinted from Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of Niddrie House Grove, in 1989, Edinburgh.

[4-9] Reprinted from Scotsman (Edinburgh) dated 13 october 1982. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[4-10] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing committee: Management Sub-committee held on 4 July 1978. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[4-11] and [4-12] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 11 June 1985, reported by Margaret Harker. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[4-13] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 23 April 1986, reported by Sandy Braid. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[4-14] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 11 January 1988, reported by Robert Thompson. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[4-15] and [4-16] Reprinted from Scotsman (Edinburgh) dated 14 November 1989, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[4-17], [4-18] and [4-19] Reprinted from the feasibility study of Tweedmuir and Teviotbank Houses prepared by Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group, 1988, submitted to Housing Committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

[4-20] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 20 September 1988. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[4-21a] and [4-21b] Reprinted from a letter dated 11 August 1988 from Mr Andrew Leslie assistant director-Scotland, Housing Corporation, to Mr Eric McGovern, chairman Niddrie House Planning and Rehabilitation Group. Edinburgh City Archive.

[4-22] Reprinted from Scotsman (Edinburgh) dated 9 September 1991, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[4-23] a photograph of Niddrie House Drive taken in 2001 by the author  
Reprinted from Housing committee, The city of Edinburgh district council Minute of meeting, Housing Committee, 25 April 1989, Edinburgh city archive.



[4-24 top] Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of an aerial view of Niddrie House in 1989, Edinburgh.

[4-24 below] Reprinted with permission from Neil Alexander, Record Office, Housing Department. A satellite Image of Niddrie House in 2002, Edinburgh.

[4-25 left and right] and [4-26] photographs of Niddrie House Park taken in 2001 by the author.

## Chapter 5

[5-1] Reprinted from Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of an aerial view of Leith Fort Housing Estate in 1991, Edinburgh.

[5-2] [5-3] and [5-4] Reprinted from Building Study 2<sup>nd</sup> series; Housing: The Architect's Journal Information Library, 7 April 1965, Sfb (98): UDC 728.1. pp. 840.

[5-5 left] Reprinted from Glendinning Miles and Muthesius Stefan, 1994, Tower block : modern public housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, New Haven ; London.

[5-5 above] Reprinted from Building Study 2<sup>nd</sup> series Housing: General, The Architect's Journal Information Library, 7 April 1965 Sfb (98): UDC 728.1 pp. 842.

[5-6] Reprinted from SCRAN (Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network) [www.scran.ac.uk](http://www.scran.ac.uk), file 02104507 accessed 3 December 2002.

[5-7] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 9 April 1965, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-8] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 17 April 1963, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-9] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 25 September 1969, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-10] Reprinted from, Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 14 September 1989, reported by Barbie Dutter. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-11] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 2 October 1990. The Edinburgh District Council. Edinburgh City Archive.

[5-12] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 14 November 1991. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-13] [5-14], [5-15] and [5-16] Reprinted from Report by the Director of Housing dated 21 January 1992, submitted to The Housing Sub-committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

[5-17] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) 9 March 1992. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-18] Reprinted with permission from Miles Glendinning, personal data collections, A letter from Dr Stefan Muthesius to the chief inspector of Historic Scotland, dated 9 October 1991.

[5-19] Reprinted from Miles Glendinning personal data collections, A letter from the chief inspector of Historic Scotland, to Dr Stefan Muthesius dated 4 February 1992.

[5-20] Reprinted from Sunday Mail (Edinburgh) dated 16 February 1992, Miles Glendinning, personal press cutting collections.

[5-21] Reprinted from Report by Fort Local Forum presented as part of the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 14 September 1993. Edinburgh City Archive.

[5-22] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 10 September 1994. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-23] Adapted by author. Original image is published in Building Study 2<sup>nd</sup> series Housing: General, The Architect's Journal Information Library, 7 April 1965 Sfb (98): UDC 728.1 p844.

[5-24] Reprinted from report by the Executive Director of Housing, Cairngorm and Grampian Houses dated 13 September 1994. Edinburgh City Archive.

[5-25] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 25 September 1969. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-26] Reprinted from Building Study 2<sup>nd</sup> series Housing: General, The Architect's Journal Information Library, 7 April 1965 Sfb (98): UDC 728.1. p. 846.

[5-27] Reprinted from Scotsman (Edinburgh) dated 25 September 1969, Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-28] Reprinted from Report by the Director of Housing dated 21 January 1992, submitted to the Housing Sub-committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

[5-29] Reprinted from Muirfield Glen Ltd, 1994, *A study into feasibility of refurbishing two derelict residential tower blocks at Leith Fort, Lindsay Road, Leith, Edinburgh*. Miles Glendinning's personal collection.

[5-30] Reprinted from report by the Executive Director of Housing, Cairngorm and Grampian Houses dated 13 September 1994. Edinburgh City Archive.

[5-31] Reprinted from Muirfield Glen Ltd, 1994, *A study into feasibility of refurbishing two derelict residential tower blocks at Leith Fort, Lindsay Road, Leith, Edinburgh*. Miles Glendinning's personal collection.

[5-32] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 7 March 1992. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[5-33] Reprinted from A letter dated 1 April 1992, from Oliver Barratt to Gordon Steele of the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland. Miles Glendinning's personal collection.

## Chapter 6

[6-1] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 17 Jan 1951. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-2] Reprinted with permission from architectural drawing of Craigmillar rehabilitation plan undertaken in 1972. Neil Alexander, Record Office, the Housing Department, Edinburgh.

[6-3] Reprinted from the Scotsman Weekly (Edinburgh) dated 13 May 1939. Press cutting collection, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-4] photographs of Craigmillar Castle housing estate taken in 2002, by the author.

[6-5] and [6-6] Reprinted with permission from architectural drawing of Craigmillar rehabilitation plan undertaken in 1972. Neil Alexander, Record Office, the Housing Department, Edinburgh.

[6-7] Reprinted from MacRae E J, "Some interesting examples of recent work from the city's architectural department", *Official Architect*, September 1941, Edinburgh. 427-429.

[6-8] Reprinted with permission from architectural drawing of Piershill Square cross-section dated 1970. Neil Alexander, Record Office, the Housing Department, Edinburgh.

[6-9] Reprinted from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of an aerial view of Piershill Square, in 1991, Edinburgh.

[6-10 left and right] [6-11] and [6-12] Reprinted with permission from National Monument Record of Scotland, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland. Photograph of Piershill Square, in 1994, Edinburgh.

[6-13] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 23 October 1969. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-14] Reprinted from Scotsman (Edinburgh) dated 24 February 1970. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-15] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 12 August 1986. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-16] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 13 January 1993. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-17] Reprinted from an electronic mail dated 25 February 2003, from Peter McLean, business manager of the Housing department, Edinburgh, reply to the author.

[6-18] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 14 March 1967. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-19] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 3 September 1983. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-20] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 27 May 1983. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-21] Reprinted with permission from the 2002 Demolition Plan of Craigmillar Castle Road housing estate. Neil Alexander, Record Office, the Housing Department, Edinburgh.

[6-22] and [6-23] photographs of Craigmillar Castle housing estate taken in 2002, by the author

[6-24] Reprinted from Report by the Director of Housing, dated 5 March 1974, "Extraordinary expenditure Piershill Square and Retalig road, Courtyard re-surfacing", submitted to the Housing Committee: Management Sub-Committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

[6-25] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee, A letter of complaint, dated 14 March 1992 from Piershill Tenants Association to the Housing Committee. Edinburgh City Archive.

[6-26] Reprinted from the minute of the meeting of the Housing Committee held on 7 April 1992. Edinburgh City Archive.

[6-27] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 8 February 1995. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-28] the layout demonstrating five phrases of the modernisation programme of Piershill Square. Conversation with Stephen Whitehead, Building Design Service, Housing Department, February, 2002. (Note: The image was adapted from Piershill Square layout, Official Architect, September 1941)

[6-29] Reprinted from a letter dated 26 January 2002 replying to the author from Miss Louisa Humm of the Historic Scotland, Edinburgh.

[6-30 top] Reprinted from MacRae E J, "Some interesting examples of recent work from the city's architectural department", Official Architect, September 1941, Edinburgh. 427-429.

[6-30 below] Reprinted from architectural drawing of Piershill Square modernisation plan, dated 1995. Stephen Whitehead, Building Design Service, the Housing Department, Edinburgh.

[6-31 top] Reprinted from architectural drawing of Piershill Square modernisation plan, dated 1995. Stephen Whitehead, Building Design Service, the Housing Department, Edinburgh.

[6-31 below] Reprinted with permission from architectural drawing of Craigmillar Castle estate cross-section, dated 1972, Neil Alexander, Record Office, the Housing Department, Edinburgh.

[6-32] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 21 January 1939. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.

[6-33] Reprinted from Evening News (Edinburgh) dated 12th October 1973, reported by James Gray. Housing Press cutting, Edinburgh Room, Edinburgh City Central Library.